

"We are realists... we dream the impossible" - Che



# Fire This Time!

## RESIST CANADA 150



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# Bombing, Destruction & Killings: Why Yemen is Under Attack & Who is Responsible for This Humanitarian Crisis?



*By Azza Rojbi*

*“This is the world’s worst cholera outbreak in the midst of the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. In the last three months alone, 400,000 cases of suspected cholera and nearly 1900 associated deaths have been recorded. Vital health, water and sanitation facilities have been crippled by more than two years of hostilities, and created the ideal conditions for diseases to spread.”*

The above is an excerpt from a joint statement by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP). The statement was released on July 26, 2017, after the heads of these three UN agencies traveled to Yemen to see for themselves the extent of the dire situation in the country.

## **Humanitarian Crisis Intensifies**

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has been worsening. The country continues to be under daily attacks and bombings by Saudi fighter jets. Backed by the United

States, the Saudi-led coalition began its bombing campaign on Yemen in March 2015 under the pretense of restoring legitimacy and stability to Yemen.

Today, over two years since the beginning of the war and over 13,000 civilian casualties later, the country is sinking into more death and destruction. The heavy bombardment by the Saudi-led coalition has destroyed hospitals, schools, mosques, homes, roads and other vital infrastructure. Coupled with the inhuman naval, aerial and land blockade imposed on the country by Saudi Arabia, Yemen faces huge shortages of many essential items, including food, fuel and medical supplies.

Hospitals and clinics that have so far survived the Saudi-led bombing are not adequately equipped to deal with the country’s healthcare needs. The absence of proper sanitary and water infrastructure has created a breeding ground for the spread of cholera in Yemen.

Being an infectious disease, cholera can kill within hours if left untreated. The lack of access to medical care and the poor living conditions of people, especially

in rural parts of Yemen, has aggravated the spread of the disease. Families are faced with either selling their belongings in order to be able to afford the travel costs for treatment, or walking for hours in extreme terrains to reach the closest functional healthcare centre.

Malnourished children are more vulnerable to the disease. According to the charity Save the Children “children under the age of 15 are now accounting for about 44% of new cases and 32% of fatalities in Yemen”. UN organizations have also warned that more than one million children are threatened by this deadly cholera outbreak.

The cholera epidemic represents one aspect of the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. Famine and malnutrition continue to ravage the country. According to the UN World Food Program, “The current level of hunger in Yemen is unprecedented and causing severe hardship for millions of people. Now, 17 million people in the country are food insecure, meaning they do not have enough food. Of these, 6.8 million - that is almost one in four

people - are severely food insecure and rely entirely on external assistance. The rate of child malnutrition is one of the highest in the world.”

### Who Has Blood on Their Hands?

The cholera outbreak and the humanitarian disaster in Yemen are a direct consequence of the Saudi-led coalition's targeting of civilians and vital infrastructure, and their disregard for human life. They could not break the resistance of the Yemeni people by military aggression alone, so they have employed a strategy that also uses their military superiority to spread chaos and destruction, in the hope of restoring imperialist hegemony over the country.

But make no mistake! The Saudi-led coalition of mainly gulf countries would have not been able to carry out their military campaign against Yemen without the backing of the United States, the UK and their imperialist allies. The US is accomplice in all the war crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition against people in Yemen.

Since day one of the war on Yemen, the US government has supported the Saudi-led coalition forces through direct military, intelligence and logistical assistance. US Air Force tankers are being used to refuel Saudi and UAE fighter jets after they drop bombs on Yemen.

In addition, the US and UK have continued selling military equipment to Saudi Arabia and helping its coalition forces to replenish their weapons inventory. In an article by Amnesty International from March 2017, the human rights group reported that “Since the conflict [in Yemen] began two years ago in March 2015, the US and UK have together transferred more than US\$5 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia... This is more than 10 times the estimated US \$450 million that the US State Department and the UK's Department for International Development have spent or budgeted to spend in aid to Yemen over the

### Hundreds Of Thousands Gather In Massive Protest Against US-Sponsored Saudi War on Yemen, March 2017.



past two years.”

This clearly outlines the real interests of the United States and their imperialist allies. Helping the Yemeni people is not one of them! The hypocrisy of the US is clear; they claim to champion democracy and freedom in the Middle East and North Africa, while at the same time they are backing the war crimes committed by their puppet Saudi Arabia against the innocent Yemeni people. Their main goal is to destroy any prospect of a democratic and independent Yemen, in favour of asserting the US hegemony over the region and pleasing their Saudi pawns.

### Hands Off Yemen!

“It used to be better and safer [before the war]. People used to go to their work, the shops were full, we used to go

to the market, but now it's not the same. We don't have health centres there to care for patients. We have trouble getting basic supplies...

My children were raised in the war. I wish the war would end and our country would go back to how it was before. I don't feel safe. I feel scared. It's not like before, when you could go anywhere and still feel safe. However, I'd never leave my country,” said Zahra Hussain from Abs, Yemen in an interview with Doctors Without Borders field workers in Yemen.

Zahra's words show desperation and anger, but they also underline hope and a deep love to her country, Yemen. This resistance of Yemeni people and their refusal to abandon their land and their rights, is what continues to fuel the resistance to the Saudi-led aggression on their country.

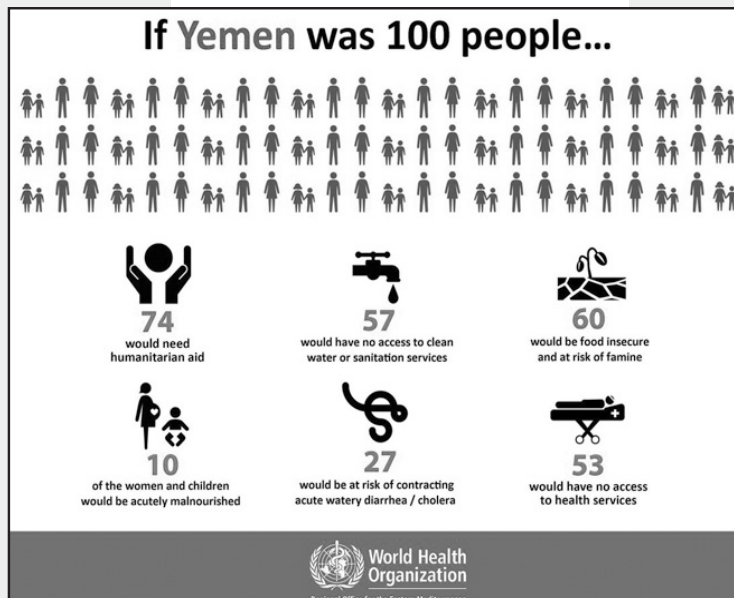
All the bombing and destruction caused by Saudi Arabia has failed to destroy the pride and dignity of the Yemeni people. Let's join them in fighting for their right to life, freedom and sovereignty.

**US/Saudi Arabia Hands off Yemen!**

**Stop Bombing Yemen!**

**Lift the Naval, Aerial and Land Blockade on Yemen!**

*Follow Azza Rajbi on Twitter:  
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By Thomas Davies

With five actions in the month of July, the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 is definitely not taking a summer break. Especially as the Liberal government recently introduced Bill C-59, a “light” version of Bill C-51 which maintains the fundamental human rights violations the original “Anti-Terrorism” legislation imposed under the Harper Conservations in 2016. The need for public education and action on this issue is absolutely crucial.

Bill C-51 greatly expanded police, spy agency, and government agencies’ powers to spy on, detain and limit our democratic and human rights. Among major changes, it granted CSIS undefined powers of “disruption” which included explicitly breaking laws and violating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. 17 Government agencies were given the ability to share our personal and private information without a warrant, and the law’s language was so broad that countless legal experts pointed out it could be used to target practically anyone.

#### Fundamentally the Same

Bill C-59 includes a new national security review committee and an intelligence commissioner, a tightening of language and increased burden of proof required before detaining someone for supporting terrorism, new limitations on how CSIS can violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and makes it slightly more difficult to pre-emptively detain people without criminal charge.

However:

- 17 different government agencies would still be sharing your personal information without a warrant.
- Police would still be able to preventatively detain us without charges for a week. They

can also continue to intimidate people into signing “peace bonds” limiting their freedoms.

- Human Right violating No-Fly lists and Security Certificates remain intact

- Perhaps most alarmingly, CSIS would still have vaguely defined powers of “disruption” which include “limiting” the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They would also be given unprecedented data collection abilities that even Bill C-51 didn’t grant them.

The Liberals are also pushing that under Bill C-59, CSIS would have have broad new immunity from prosecution for breaking laws! This is incredibly dangerous given CSIS long history of scandals and coverups.

**Pattern of Abuse and Scandals, Cover-Ups**  
Just last year a federal court found that CSIS used a huge and secretive data collection facility, the Operational Data Analysis



statement of claim. One of the five lawsuit members, “Cemal,” is an analyst who worked for CSIS for more than 20 years. He is also Muslim. He states, “The culture of CSIS is hostile to Muslims, and this is more than just

an unfriendly work environment — it is deeply ingrained prejudice of distrust for Muslims which has meant that Muslims are used and managed as needed, but are not part of the team.”

When Islamophobia is being used to justify these “National Security” laws in countries like Canada, US, France and Britain – giving

more powers to a spy agency which has already proven itself to be rife with Islamophobia at the highest levels is like knowingly adding fuel to a forest fire.

#### Justin Trudeau: Respect Our Human Rights

The Working Group had new signs at its pickets and banner drops in July which stated, “Scrap Bill C-51! Justin Trudeau: Respect Our Human Rights”. For 126 consecutive weeks we continue to find broad interest and outrage as people come to understand the consequences of Bill C-51 and now Bill C-59. We are not interested in negotiating our human rights, especially when the government hasn’t even attempted to explain how any of these new “security” provisions makes us more “secure”. We continue to demand:

REPEAL BILL C-51!

SCRAP BILL C-59!

JUSTIN TRUDEAU: RESPECT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS!

Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:  
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# Respect our human rights!

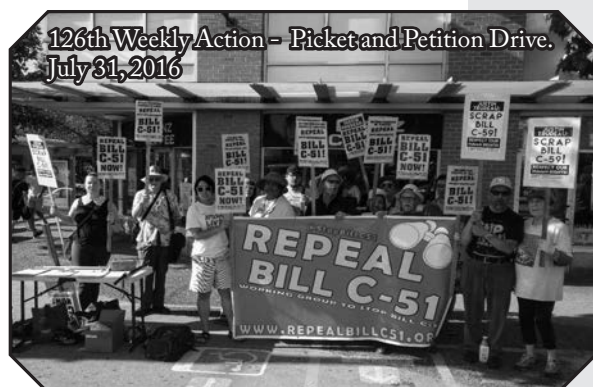
## *fighting against bill c-51 and bill c-59*

Centre, to run unauthorized advanced data analytics to aid in its investigations. They also backtracked on their promise to reveal to a Senate committee how many Canadian journalists they spied on in the past, citing “operational security.”

This month five longtime CSIS employees launched a 35 million dollar lawsuit alleging, “CSIS is a workplace rife with discrimination, harassment, bullying and abuse of authority, in which the tone set by management, namely to mock, abuse and humiliate and threaten employees, has permeated the workforce.”

More specifically, the 54-page statement of claim outline management indifference to harassment and discrimination specifically against Muslim, Black and gay employees.

Anyone who thought it might be a good idea to grant CSIS “disruption” powers and legal immunity should take some time to read the shocking 54 page





*By Thomas Davies*

As the summer heats up to record temperatures, the Climate Convergence coalition in Vancouver is staying active in its campaign of monthly IntersActions to Stop the Kinder Morgan pipeline and Site C Dam. With many of Kinder Morgan's construction permits taking effect at the beginning of September – this organizing becomes even more important.

On July 15 the TD Bank at a busy intersection in Burnaby BC, the city where Kinder Morgan's pipeline would terminate, was the location of another high visibility action. TD Bank has committed the largest investment to the controversial pipeline at \$731 million. Other Canadian banks such as RBC, Scotiabank, CIBC, Bank of Montreal and National Bank are all also major investors with over \$400 million committed by each.

Protestors set up directly in front of the bank with banners and an information table, and were able to speak to everyone going into the bank about the Kinder Morgan pipelines negative consequences and TD Bank's massive support. Thousands more people saw as activists marched and chanted at the intersection adjacent to the bank with large banners and signs.

Climate Convergence has also been present at many community festivals distributing information and collecting hundreds of petition signatures against both of the unwanted and unnecessary mega-projects.

A major mobilization has been called for September 9, with the theme: "Kinder Morgan WE STILL SAY NO! People and Planet Before Pipelines and Profit". This is at the time Kinder Morgan is threatening to begin construction on the pipeline route, and will be an important focal point to bring people together to connect and coordinate with all of the important resistance which will surely be ongoing.

This grassroots mobilization is especially important during the transition from a Liberal to NDP provincial government. The NDP ran on a promise to "use every tool in our toolbox to stop the project from going ahead." Many people supported them on this basis alone. Now Premier John Horgan has directed Environment and Climate Change Minister George Heyman to "defend B.C.'s interests" instead of simply stopping the pipeline.

The change might be only a few words, but it could mean a major shift in approach. Especially when Horgan danced around the issue of the pipeline during his first

meetings with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, to the outrage of many including well known former MLA and radio personality Rafe Mair. He wrote:

"For God's sake, Mr. Horgan, thousands of British Columbians are prepared to go to jail while you and the Attorney-General, leaders of the party of protest, heirs to the men and women of the people whose names you still mention in hushed terms of reverence, are afraid that if you stand up for our sacred environment, that nasty man Trudeau Minor or big, bad Kinder Morgan might sue us!"

Do you think that real British Columbians ready to risk going to jail are going to be pushed around by a coward from Ottawa, propped by the oil industry, just as you apparently are?"

With or without the support of the provincial government, we will fight against building the pipeline. With the great news that Petronas was forced to cancel its planned 11.4 billion dollar LNG plant on Lelu Island, we are moving forward to make sure the Kinder Morgan pipeline is next!

**Kinder Morgan, We Still Say No!**

**People and Planet Before Pipelines and Profit!**

*Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:  
@thomasdavies59*



# WE STILL SAY NO!

## THE FIGHT AGAINST THE KINDER MORGAN PIPELINE & SITE C DAM



# VENEZUELA SOLIDARITY GROWS IN VANCOUVER!

## JOINT DEMONSTRATION OVERCOMES RIGHT-WING THREATS WITH STRONG TURNOUT

*By Alison Bodine*

On July 7, 2017 the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice - Venezuela Solidarity Campaign and the Hugo Chavez People's Defense Front - Southwest Chapter jointly organized a successful action in defense of Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process. It is to be noted that this was also the 20<sup>th</sup> picket and rally organized by the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice - Venezuela Solidarity Campaign.

Through both a picket at the US Consulate, and a rally and petitioning at the Vancouver Art Gallery, peace-loving people and Venezuela solidarity campaigners from diverse backgrounds came together in the streets of Vancouver and demanded loud and clear "US Hands Off Venezuela!" and "No to Regime Change in Venezuela!"

This action was a great success, and not only because it demonstrated the support of people in Vancouver for the Bolivarian Revolutionary process and the democratically elected President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro. This action was also a great success because it once again defeated the aggressive and violent right-wing Venezuelans in the streets of Vancouver.

On June 2, just one month prior to July 7 rally, pro-US right-wing Venezuelans attempted to intimidate and shut-down a Venezuela solidarity demonstration in Vancouver organized by the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign. Although the violent and aggressive right-wing thugs brought 150 people to their counter-protest, they were defeated in the face of the peaceful and united supporters of revolutionary Venezuela, who held their ground and refused to be bullied and silent.

These same provocateurs vowed to return to disrupt the July 7 Venezuela solidarity protest as well. However, they didn't even show up. It seems that they knew that if they did, they would once again be defeated by voices united in defense of Venezuela as well as in defense of our rights to freedom of expression and peaceful protest.

Without the verbal and physical attacks by the pro-intervention Venezuelans, participants at the July 7 Venezuela solidarity actions were able to focus all of their energy towards educating passers-by about foreign intervention in Venezuela and the right of the



people and government of Venezuela to their sovereignty and self-determination.

The July 7 actions began with a picket action at the US Consulate. This lively protest filled the air of downtown Vancouver with loud chants of "US Hands Off Venezuela!" and "No to Sanctions! No to Intervention!" After rounds of energetic picketing, participants marched up from the US Consulate to the Vancouver Art Gallery for the second part of the action of the day.

In the large plaza in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign and the Hugo Chavez People's Defense Front - Southwest Chapter brought together over 110 people under the demands of "US Hands Off Venezuela!" and "No to Regime Change in Venezuela!"

At the rally, there was a dynamic program of speakers and music, as well as an information table and petitions demanding "US Hands Off Venezuela!" Following an opening by Eagle Eyes, a hereditary chief from Sechelt, speakers at the rally included, Alison Bodine, Coordinator of the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, Azza Rojbi from Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), Thomas Davies from Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and Brian Sproule from the CPC-ML, as well as Eagle Eyes. The speeches and solidarity greetings were interspersed with beautiful live Latin American music from Maria Luisa Melendez.

Over the last four months the people of Venezuela have been facing an escalating right-wing campaign of violence and terror,

which is funded and supported by the US government and their allies. The violent counterrevolutionary opposition has, among other crimes, burned people alive, barricaded hospitals, and lit food reserves on fire, all in an attempt to overthrow democratically elected Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and reverse the gains made by poor, working and oppressed people in the last 19 years of the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

In the face of these attacks, international solidarity with President Maduro and the Bolivarian Revolution has become important than ever before. From here in Vancouver, Canada the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice (FTT) - Venezuela Solidarity Campaign has been organizing monthly solidarity actions since December of 2015 in response to the increasing right-wing and imperialist assault on Venezuela.

We invite all peace-loving people and organizations in Vancouver that support Venezuela's right to sovereignty and self-determination to join us at further actions. We must continue to defend Venezuela, as well as our own right to express our support for the government of Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process without threats, abuse and violence by right-wing thugs and counter-protestors!

For more information about the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign go to [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net) or follow @FTT\_np on Twitter.

*Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:  
@Alisoncolette*



# ¡SOLIDARIDAD CON VENEZUELA CRECE EN VANCOUVER!

Demostración conjunta supera amenazas de la derecha con fuerte participación



Eagle Eyes, jefe hereditario indígena de Sechelt, habla a la demostración

**\* EN ESPAÑOL \***

*Por Alison Bodine*

El 7 de julio de 2017, el Movimiento Fire This Time por la Justicia Social—Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela y Frente para la Defensa de los Pueblos Hugo Chávez—Capítulo Suroeste organizaron conjuntamente una acción exitosa en defensa de Venezuela y el proceso revolucionario bolivariano. Hay que apuntar que fue también la vigésima manifestación organizada por el Movimiento Fire This Time por la Justicia Social—Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela.

Por medio de tanto un acción en el Consulado de Estados Unidos y una marcha y recaudación de firmas en peticiones en la Galería de Arte de Vancouver, los amantes de la paz y

los simpatizantes de la solidaridad con Venezuela de diversos orígenes se unieron en las calles de Vancouver para exigir, alto y claro, “¡EE.UU. saquen sus manos de Venezuela!” y “¡No al cambio de régimen en Venezuela!”

Esta acción fue un gran éxito, y no solo porque demostró el apoyo del pueblo en Vancouver al proceso revolucionario bolivariano y al presidente electo democráticamente Nicolás Maduro. Esta acción fue también un gran éxito porque nuevamente derrotó a los agresivos y violentos derechistas venezolanos en las calles de Vancouver.

El 2 de junio, apenas un mes antes de la marcha del 7 de julio, simpatizantes de la derecha venezolana intentaron intimidar y detener una demostración en solidaridad con Venezuela en Vancouver, organizada por el Movimiento Fire This Time por la Justicia Social—Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela. Aunque los violentos y agresivos matones de la derecha trajeron 150 personas a su anti-protesta, fueron derrotados ante los pacíficos y unidos simpatizantes de la Venezuela revolucionaria, quienes mantuvieron su posición y se rehusaron a ser intimidados y silenciados.

Estos mismos provocadores aseguraron que regresarían a sabotear la protesta de solidaridad con Venezuela del 7 de julio. Sin embargo, ni siquiera se presentaron. Todo parece indicar que sabían que si lo hacían serían derrotados nuevamente por las voces unidas a favor de Venezuela y en defensa de nuestros derechos de expresión y protesta pacífica.

Sin los ataques verbales y físicos de los venezolanos pro-intervencionistas, los participantes en las acciones de solidaridad con Venezuela del 7 de julio pudieron centrar sus energías en educar a los transeúntes sobre la intervención

extranjera en Venezuela y el derecho del pueblo y el gobierno de Venezuela a su soberanía y autodeterminación.

Las acciones del 7 de julio iniciaron con una acción de piquete en el Consulado de Estados Unidos. Estas protestas animadas llenaron el aire del centro de Vancouver con ruidosos cantos de “¡EE.UU. quiten sus manos de Venezuela!” y “¡No a las sanciones! ¡No a la intervención!” Luego de rondas de energética manifestación, los participantes marcharon desde el Consulado de EE.UU. hacia la Galería de Arte de Vancouver para la segunda parte de la acción del día.

En la gran plaza frente a la Galería de Arte de Vancouver, la Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela de Fire This Time y el Frente para la Defensa de los Pueblos Hugo Chávez—Capítulo Suroeste unieron a más de 110 personas bajo las exigencias de “¡EE.UU.

saquen sus manos de Venezuela!” y “¡No al cambio de régimen en Venezuela!”

En la marcha hubo un dinámico programa de oradores y música, igual que una mesa de información y peticiones demandando “¡EE.UU. saquen sus manos de Venezuela!” Siguiendo una apertura de Eagle Eyes, jefe hereditario indígena de Sechelt, entre los oradores de la marcha estaban Alison Bodine, Coordinadora de la Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela de Fire This Time; Azza Rojbi, de Movilización Contra la Guerra y la Ocupación (MAWO: Mobilization Against War and Occupation); Thomas Davies, de las Comunidades de Vancouver en Solidaridad con Cuba (VCSC: Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba) y Brian Sproule de CPC-ML, y también de Eagle Eyes. Los discursos fueron intercalados con hermosa música latinoamericana en vivo, interpretada por María Luisa Meléndez.

Durante los últimos cuatro meses, el pueblo de Venezuela ha estado enfrentando una escalada de campaña de violencia y terror de la derecha, financiada y apoyada por el gobierno de EE.UU. y sus aliados. La violenta oposición contrarrevolucionaria ha, entre otros crímenes, quemado personas vivas y han montado barricadas en hospitales, han quemado reservas de alimentos, todo en un intento de derrocar al presidente electo democráticamente Nicolás Maduro y revertir los logros alcanzados por el pueblo pobre, trabajador y oprimido en los últimos 19 años del proceso revolucionario bolivariano.

Ante estos ataques, la solidaridad internacional con el Presidente Maduro y la Revolución Bolivariana se ha vuelto más importantes que nunca antes. Desde acá en Vancouver, Canadá el Movimiento Fire This Time por la Justicia Social (FTT)—Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela ha estado organizando acciones mensuales de solidaridad desde diciembre de 2015 en respuesta a los crecientes ataques derechistas e imperialistas contra Venezuela.

Invitamos a todas las personas y organizaciones amantes de la paz en Vancouver que apoyen el derecho de Venezuela a la soberanía y autodeterminación para unírnos en otras acciones. ¡Debemos continuar defendiendo a Venezuela y a nuestro derecho de expresar nuestro apoyo hacia el gobierno de Venezuela y el proceso revolucionario bolivariano sin amenazas, abuso o violencia por parte de los matones y los contra-manifestantes derechistas!

Para más información sobre la Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela de Fire This Time, vaya a [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net) o siga @FTT\_np en Twitter.

*Traducido por: Reynaldo Cruz Díaz*

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# WHY INDIGENOUS ISSUES MATTER TO EVERYONE IN CANADA

## IF YOU THINK INJUSTICES AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLE LAY SOMEWHERE IN CANADA'S PAST, THINK AGAIN!

**“HISTORY IS NOT THE PAST,  
IT IS THE PRESENT.  
WE CARRY OUR HISTORY WITH US.  
WE ARE OUR HISTORY.  
IF WE PRETEND OTHERWISE,  
WE LITERALLY ARE CRIMINALS.”**

**– JAMES BALDWIN  
(I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO)**

*By Tamara Hansen*

On July 1, 2017 many people across Canada and internationally celebrated the country's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. At the same time, many excellent articles were written about why we should question this “celebration”, especially from Indigenous perspectives. Many asked what the last 150 years of Canada has offered the Indigenous nations of these lands. At the same time, critique was not limited to Indigenous people, for example, July 1 also marks what many Chinese-Canadians refer to as “Humiliation Day” when on July 1, 1923 the government of Canada instituted the Chinese Exclusion Act, banning all Chinese people from immigrating to Canada, a law maintained until 1947.

Often in spite of this history, many people wonder how one can be such a downer about Canada's birthday, when in comparison to life in other countries around the world, things in Canada seem so peaceful and good. While it is true that many people in Canada live in relative peace and comfort, this has never been extended to Indigenous people in this country. However, rather than review 150+ years of injustice in Canada, this article will focus on news stories about Indigenous people in Canada, which have made headlines since July 1, 2017, just one month ago. Rather than explain the injustice of history, I hope to illuminate the injustices of the present, which of course, as the James Baldwin poem mentions, is intrinsically linked to history. However, I hope to tear down some of the too often made arguments that injustices against Indigenous people lay somewhere in Canada's

past. I believe that the news headlines of the last month are a fine illustration of how the ‘history’ of injustice, is not really ‘history’ at all.

Prime Minister Trudeau's nation to nation promises vs. paternalistic reality

On July 1, 2017 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's remarks for the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Canada read in part, “As we mark Canada 150, we also recognize that for many, today is not an occasion for celebration. Indigenous Peoples in this country have faced oppression for centuries. As a society, we must acknowledge and apologize for past wrongs, and chart a path forward for the next 150 years – one in which we continue to build our nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationship with the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation.” This promise, to work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples on a “nation to nation” basis, is what many Indigenous people have been demanding of the government of Canada for generations. It is supposed to mean that Indigenous peoples and their governments will be treated as unique nations and their work with the government of Canada will be one of mutual respect and protocol, much like international relations. Basically it should mean an end to the paternalistic relationship or the guardian/ward of the state system, where the government of Canada forces Indigenous people to compete for resources, makes decisions on their behalf,



treats them as children/subjects, etc. However, so far there has been no attempt by the Trudeau government to surrender any power to Indigenous peoples or to respect them as nations with legitimate demands for their human rights; specific Indigenous rights; and land rights and self-determination.

Not only that, but since July 1, Justin Trudeau did a cover-story interview with Rolling Stone magazine, which titled its article, “Justin Trudeau: The North Star.” In the article Trudeau made some grotesque remarks about a charity boxing match he did in 2012 against an Algonquin Conservative Senator named Patrick Brazeau.

In the July 26 article, Trudeau says of the boxing match and beating his opponent, “It wasn't random, [...] I wanted someone who would be a good foil, and we stumbled upon the scrappy tough-guy senator from an indigenous community. [...] I saw it as the right kind of narrative, the right story to tell.” Many commentators have asked what “narrative” Trudeau is alluding to, because it seems he means the “savage” versus “civilized” narrative that has been a part of Canada's racist mythology for the last 150+ years.

In an article for the Canadian Press, Cindy Blackstock, a Gitksan professor and executive



Justin Trudeau punches Patrick Brazeau during their 2012 Charity boxing march

**"IT WASN'T RANDOM, [...] I WANTED SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE A GOOD FOIL, AND WE STUMBLED UPON THE SCRAPPY TOUGH-GUY SENATOR FROM AN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY. [...] I SAW IT AS THE RIGHT KIND OF NARRATIVE, THE RIGHT STORY TO TELL."  
- CANADA'S PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU**

director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, responded to Trudeau's comments to Rolling Stone. She says, "The idea that you would go searching for an Indigenous person to engage in an exercise with the aim, really, of making yourself look good, as that seems to imply, is disturbing." What does it mean when you feel the country will rally around you because you beat up an Indigenous "scrappy tough-guy"? Trudeau is no "northern star", indeed he is closer to U.S. President Trump's tactics, gaining admiration through populist racism and stereotypes.

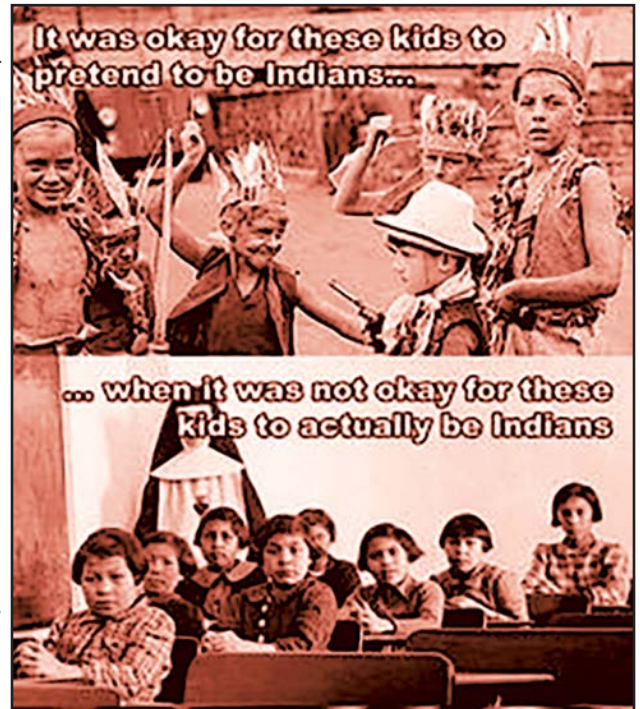
Trudeau probably made these comments to Rolling Stone just days after his July 1 speech promising to "apologize for past wrongs, and chart a path forward." Sadly in the week following Canada's birthday four Indigenous youth commit suicide: one 21 year old male from Fort Severn, a 15-year-old girl from Nibinamik, and most tragically two 12-year-olds from Pikangikum. Words cannot express how urgent the situation is for Indigenous youth in Canada, yet the government is doing very little. While Trudeau reminisces about his victories in the boxing ring, there is no national strategy or viable plan to help First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities. Instead they are offered Band-Aid solutions that often come too late.

A big part of these suicides are the living conditions on reserves, which are often compared to conditions in impoverished third world countries. But it is also a lack of hope, a lack of services, and feelings of isolation and alienation – which come back to the paternalistic ways the government of Canada has treated indigenous people over the last 150+ years.

Even if these big historic questions, such as

nation to nation dialogues, are hard for us to grasp, below are two examples of very obvious problems, with obvious solutions, which the Trudeau government has not acted on.

First, the fact that many Indigenous communities in Canada are under boil water advisories, which means the water is not safe to drink out of the tap, it must be boiled first. In a Metro newspaper article from June 29, 2017 they explained, "As Canada spends a half-billion dollars celebrating its 150th year since confederation, it appears more than 150 drinking water advisories still exist, most of them in First Nations communities." The article continues, "For Shoal Lake 40 First Nation—which straddles the Manitoba-Ontario border and provides Winnipeg with access to clean drinking water—2017 marks 20 years (7,436 days) since boil water advisories began." For the government of Canada this lack of access to safe drinking water is an expensive problem to fix, however, if it was happening anywhere else in Canada the response would be lightning quick. We would see the government appealing to NGOs like the Red Cross and other institutions to assist in their emergency action. However, it has been years (even decades) for some first nations, with no solutions in sight. Making clean drinking water a priority for every person living in



Canada requires a bare minimum dedication to equality. It seems the Trudeau government lacks this basic priority.

Another issue that demonstrates the Trudeau government lacks even the most basic commitment to Indigenous people is the case of Indigenous children in care. Over a year ago, Cindy Blackstock won her 10 year battle against the government of Canada at the Canadian Human Rights tribunal. The tribunal found that the federal government has been discriminating against First Nation children on reserves, by underfunding their services when compared to children living off-



reserve. While I would argue that all children and youth services are underfunded, the truth is that on-reserve services are given less per child than others. This

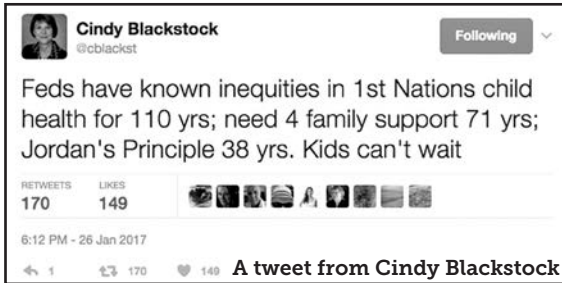
amounts to discrimination by the government against 165,000 children based solely on their race, and should have been easily rectified in the budget this year, but was not.

## Delays & Restart for Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

In 2014, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) published a report acknowledging 1,181 murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls in Canada. This was a breakthrough for communities who have been fighting for over 40 years for the government and police to take the cases of their missing and murdered loved ones seriously. However, as usual, this report is believed to have grossly underestimated the number of murdered and missing Indigenous women, which many believe could be as high as 4,000.

After decades of pleading from families, community members, and their supporters, the government of Canada agreed to launch a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. However, since almost the first week, it has been mired in controversy. This culminated in July with the demand for a 'hard reset' on the inquiry by many family members, community leaders, and their supporters. In a Toronto Star article, journalist Thomas Walkom outlined the broad strokes of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. He writes, "It is trying to focus on broad structural questions. Why are Indigenous women and girls more at risk of violence than their non-Indigenous counterparts? What can be done to improve the situation? What role does systemic racism play? On the other, it is supposed to provide some form of comfort to real, individual Indigenous families who have lost female relatives and want to know what happened to them. [...] The inquiry is in chaos. Five senior officials, including one commissioner, have quit. The remaining four commissioners narrowly escaped a motion of censure last week from the influential Assembly of First Nations, which wants the inquiry's terms of reference rewritten."

Indeed this inquiry has been heavily criticized in the media by the families of the missing and murdered. One of the main points of



contention is that the inquiry does not have a mandate to reopen police cases, even though a huge part of the story is police inaction, mishandling of cases, or corrupting evidence. While it seems the government of Canada and Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett want this to be a report which finds the "systemic" or "root" causes of the violence against Indigenous women, many argue those reports have already been written and published by the government. In his article Walkom further writes, "The root causes of systemic violence against Indigenous women are already well-documented. The 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples blamed a cycle of despair rooted in a history of broken treaties and cultural demoralization. British Columbia's 2012 Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry singled out "the legacy of colonialism in Canada.""

The families of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls want justice. They want this inquiry to help dig and find the truth about what happened to their loved ones. It is time for the government of Canada to work with them to uncover what the police and RCMP are trying to sweep under the rug. It is time for this inquiry to 'get real' and not just become another report filed away with the 1996 and 2012 reports. The best thing we can do to honour these Indigenous women and girls is to find justice for their families. During that process we must we must build pressure on the government to deal with the 'root' problems: the unjust legacy of colonialism, land rights of Indigenous people, and the right of Indigenous nations to self-determination.

Within the ongoing news stories about the challenges faced by the national inquiry, another horrifying story about Indigenous women emerged at the end of July 2017. The Saskatoon Health Region came forward to apologize to a group of Indigenous women who were deceived and/or coerced into tubal ligation surgery, a permanent form of birth control, which clamps or severs a woman's fallopian tubes. While these were cases from the recent past, unfortunately, Indigenous women's right to informed consent over their bodies, has been an ongoing issue in colonial Canada. Forced sterilizations of Indigenous



**Carolyn Bennett, Canada's Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs is greeted at a Canada Day event with signs such as: "Innu Disappointed in Canada" & "Canada" 150 Years of 'liar liar pants on fire'"**



women happened across Canada at various times in this country's history.

The 2014 book, "An Act of Genocide, Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women" by Karen Stote documents 580 cases of Indigenous women being sterilized from 1971 to 1974 in federal hospitals. Going back further in history, Sexual Sterilization Acts were passed in Alberta (1928) and British Columbia (1933), both were policies of eugenics - to have women with "undesirable traits" sterilized to prevent "undesirable" children. It was often used on those declared mentally unfit to parent, and was disproportionality used against Indigenous women. Stote writes, "Indigenous peoples were targeted under Alberta's eugenic legislation (1928-1972), making up 6-8% of those sterilized overall, despite only being about 3% of the population; although in later

## Supreme Court of Canada rulings & Indigenous land rights

In an article for the *Globe and Mail* newspaper, Tracey Lindberg (Kelly Lake Cree Nation) and Angela Cameron, both professors of Law at Ottawa University write, “The Supreme Court of Canada has legally empowered Canada’s lower level administrative agencies [such as NEB] to make decisions about Indigenous rights in venues where they should not have that authority. In a cynical sense, you could say that Canada is allowing corporations access to Indigenous peoples’ territories and lives with a diminishing/nominal requirement of administrative box-checking. Indigenous rights negotiation and nation-to-nation dialogue are pushed further away from Canada as a nation.” So while some aspects of the Supreme Court decisions were declared a victory for Indigenous peoples (The Clyde River Inuit were able to stop a proposed project for seismic testing in the Arctic), the SCC’s rulings overall reassert the NEB’s role in “consulting” with Indigenous nations. This is despite the fact that most Indigenous people believe their consultations are done in bad faith, and as Lindberg and Cameron explain, allowing the NEB to do this work removes the pressure on the Trudeau government to follow through with their promise of nation to nation negotiations.

## Daily racism faced by Indigenous people in Canada

While not explicitly the 'fault' of the government of Canada. There have been many cases of the daily racism faced by Indigenous people that have made headlines since July 1. First, a group of young white men who are members of the Canadian Armed Forces and a "Western chauvinist" group called Proud Boys attacked a Mi'kmaq ceremony on Canada Day; Secondly, the attack on an Indigenous man by a Canadian Tire employee calling him a 'thief' for no apparent reason other than his race; Thirdly the racist baby onesie that had to be removed from shelves in Walmart Canada; and fourthly the heart-breaking death of 34 year old Indigenous woman, Barbara Kentner. While I will not be able to go into each incident in depth. I would like to look specifically at the death of Barbara Kentner, as a tragic outcome of how the dehumanizing racism of the government of Canada towards Indigenous people leads to violence against Indigenous peoples.

On July 4, just days after Canada's 150 birthday, Barbara Kentner a 34 year old Indigenous woman, died of injuries sustained in January, when a young man threw a trailer hitch at her from a moving vehicle. Kentner's sister, who was walking with her on the side of the road, apparently heard the boy yell, "I got one!" In an interview after her death Kentner's cousin, Debbie Kakagamic, told the CBC she believes the charges against the young man who threw the trailer hitch should be upgraded after Kentner's death, and that others in the vehicle should also be charged. She said, "They must know exactly what they were doing. The driver had to pull up alongside, slow down, like, they



**Photos of Barbara Kentner and her family & a mural created to honour Kentner's memory after injuries sustained from a vicious racist attack took her life on July 4, 2017.**

all knew, everyone in that vehicle must have known what they were doing. And it was a game for them.” When for over 150 years the government of Canada has continued to treat Indigenous people as inferior, to justify the theft of their lands; to justify the ‘advances’ of colonialism; and the government’s attempted genocide against Indigenous peoples - how can we not think this will have an impact on the psyche of non-Indigenous people in Canada? Indeed these hate crimes committed by individuals or small groups are related to that history and “legacy of colonialism in Canada” as the 2012 missing women report concluded.





## Self-determination for Indigenous Nations!

To be fair, there have also been some good news stories about Indigenous people since July 1, 2017. For example, Vancouver held its first Indigenous Fashion Week; a new tattoo parlor opened in Toronto specializing in Indigenous designs; the North American Indigenous Games took place in Toronto; the 27th *Présence autochtone* festival (a.k.a. the Montreal First Peoples Festival) will take place in August; and according to Canada's latest census data Indigenous languages are on the rise across Canada. All of these stories are important parts of Indigenous people reclaiming pride in their distinct cultures, languages and knowledges. Remember, these are the same cultures and languages that the government of Canada systemically tried to eliminate for at least the first 130 years of Canada's history (the final residential school closed in 1997), however many would argue their assimilation project has not ended, only taken a more humanist mask. Not to mention that the good news stories are mostly cultural gains, there is no sign the government is taking Indigenous peoples' rights more seriously.

I recently saw the documentary "I Am Not Your Negro" about the life and ideas of queer Black author and visionary, James Baldwin. While the film mostly spoke about struggles between Black and White people in the U.S., it also spoke pointedly about racism in general as an ideology. I quoted a poem by Baldwin from the film at the beginning of this article, but also wanted to use some of his ideas to conclude this article as well.

On the Dick Cavett Show in 1968, James Baldwin was confronted by the 'but not all white people are racist' argument that we hear often today. Baldwin responded, not by attacking all White people, but instead by critiquing the system that keeps white folks in a position of power and privilege. He said, "I don't know what most white people in this country feel. But I can only conclude what they feel from the state of their institutions. I don't know if white Christians hate Negroes or not, but I know we have a Christian church which is white and a Christian church which is black. I know, as Malcolm X once put it, the most segregated hour in American life is high noon on Sunday. [...] I don't know whether the labor unions and their bosses really hate me – that doesn't matter – but I know I'm not in their union. I don't know whether the real estate lobby has anything against black people, but I know the real estate lobby is keeping me in the ghetto. I don't know if the board of education hates black people, but I know the textbooks they give my children to read and the schools we have to go to. Now, this is the evidence. You want me to make an act of faith, risking myself, my wife, my woman, my sister, my children on some idealism which you assure me exists in America, which I have never seen."

There are many lessons in this quotation, especially about the interconnectedness of struggles for justice. For concluding this article I hope you will reflect on why so

many in Canada insist that racism is in the past, when all statistics, reports and research demonstrates that we have fundamental inequality in our country between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. When one responds to a discussion with, "why can't you just let the past stay in the past?" It demonstrates an ignorance of the facts, of the headlines, and of the statistics. It means asking Indigenous people to "make a leap of faith" to find a Canada which they have never seen. Indeed, that Canada does not exist and that Canada is not coming under Justin Trudeau. That society will come when Indigenous people have the power that was taken from them and their right, as Indigenous nations, to self-determination.

*Follow Tamara Hansen on Twitter:  
@THans01*



**Protesters with a banner for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - July 1, 2017**

# THE TALE OF TWO ELECTIONS: DEMOCRACY & COUNTER-DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA



*By Alison Bodine*



On July 30, 2017 the people of Venezuela went to the polls to elect a National Constituent Assembly (ANC). The vote was Constitutional, verifiable, secret, direct and universal, and over 8 million people participated. Despite this reality, the government of the United States and their allies, along with mainstream capitalist media have all decried the elections as “illegitimate,” “unpopular” and a “sham.”

On July 17, there was another “vote” in Venezuela. In sharp contrast to their reaction to the Constituent Assembly, imperialist governments and their capitalist media had nothing but praise for this illegal “plebiscite.” Basically, Venezuela’s right-wing opposition organized a non-binding referendum without the authority of either Venezuela’s National Electoral Council or the Constitution of Venezuela. The opposition claims that over 7 million people participated in this referendum, however, the results are not verifiable as the ballots were destroyed.

It has been 19 years since election of Hugo Chavez in 1998 and the beginning of the Bolivarian Revolutionary process. Since then, poor, working and oppressed people in Venezuela have made tremendous gains in their standards of living; in healthcare, education, housing, access to food and clean water, among other basic indicators of quality of life.

Today, Venezuela has a revolutionary government led by the democratically elected President, Nicolas Maduro, but the economy of Venezuela is still run by Venezuela’s rich class. This rich class is represented in government by the opposition coalition

MUD (the Democratic Round Table).

Over the past four months the people of Venezuela have been facing an increasingly violent campaign by Venezuela’s right-wing opposition and their violent mercenaries, whose ultimate goal is to overthrow the legitimate government of Nicolas Maduro and reverse the gains of the Bolivarian revolution. Over 100 people have been killed and over 1000 injured in the terrorist attacks that have included murders, assassinations, road barricades, fires and attacks on government buildings, among other crimes.

The National Constituent Assembly is the revolutionary government of Venezuela’s response to this escalated violence. The right-wing so-called plebiscite was the opposition’s response to the ANC. Thus there is, with these two votes, a “Tale of Two Elections,” an important illustration of the revolution and counter-revolution in Venezuela.

## **What is the National Constituent Assembly?**

“Today, on May 1, I announce that I am going to use my constitutional powers as the head of state to convoke the Original Constituent Power, which, according to Article 347, allows for the working class and the people convoke the National Constituent Assembly...I convoke a citizens’ Constituent Assembly, not a Constituent Assembly of parties or elites...a citizen’s, workers’, communal, campesinos’ Constituent Assembly. A feminist, youth, students’ Constituent Assembly. An Indigenous Constituent Assembly.” (teleSUR)

As President Maduro explained, the ANC would be elected by the people of Venezuela through a popular, direct and secret vote. The ANC would then be charged with proposing

changes to improve and broaden Venezuela’s Constitution in order to strengthen the Bolivarian revolutionary process and “make peace triumph over violence.” After the ANC had completed its work, any proposed changes to the Constitution of Venezuela would then be approved by the people of Venezuela in a referendum.

In the three months following the May announcement, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), together with the various social institutions of the Bolivarian revolution, mobilized the mass majority of people in Venezuela towards the ANC election. By election day, July 30, there were 6,120 candidates running for the 545 seats in the Constituent Assembly.

Not a single candidate in the election was from the right-wing opposition. This, however, was not because they were not allowed from running. The right-wing opposition parties decided to boycott the National Constituent Assembly. While at the same time, they increased their campaign of violence and fear meant to discourage the people of Venezuela from participating in the vote.

It is also important to note that, as with previous elections, the Constituent Assembly elections were overseen by the National Election Council (CNE). The CNE is actually one of the five branches of government in Venezuela.

## **July 30, 2017 – Election Day**

The Constituent Assembly elections were a great success for the revolutionary government of Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process. According



**Waraos Indigenous community travel by boat in Delta Amacuro to exercise their right to vote in the constituent assembly.**



to the CNE, on Sunday, July 30, 8,089,320 Venezuelans went to the polls for the Constituent Assembly vote. This represents 41.5% of the registered voters in Venezuela (people living abroad were not able to vote). In comparison, in 2013 President Maduro won the election with 7,587,579 votes and Chavez won his 2012 re-election with 8,191,132 votes.

537 representatives, out of the 545 total members, were elected on that day. The majority of these seats were voted on using the method that most people in North America are familiar with, by region. Much like elections in the US or Canada, 364 representatives were chosen on the basis of where people lived, with one representative for every 83,000 people, and at least one representative for every municipality. A further 173 of the representatives were chosen based on sector. This means that they were nominated and voted upon by specific sectors of society such as workers, farmers, people with disabilities, students, pensioners, the business sector and communes and communal councils. This way, groups within Venezuelan society, with specific needs, could be sure to have their interests represented in the Constituent Assembly.

The final eight representatives were chosen from within Venezuela's Indigenous peoples on Tuesday August 1. In keeping with the Bolivarian Constitution of 1999, for Indigenous people the "their ancestral methods of choice and participation" were recognized as part of the election process.

The ANC will be inaugurated on Friday, August 4.

**Venezuela's Violent Right-Wing Opposition Attacks Democracy**

The great success of the Constituent Assembly elections came despite an intensified campaign by the violent right-wing opposition to sabotage the vote. In the months leading up to July 30, leading members of the opposition publically stated that they would not let the Constituent Assembly happen. Following their marching orders, violent mercenaries and counter-revolutionary thugs then got to work, bringing violence and terror to the streets of Venezuela. This included the assassination of a Constituent Assembly candidate, Felix Pineda Marciano, the night before the election.

The violence in the streets of Venezuela continued on election day. The Minister of Defense, Vladimir Padrino Lopez, reported that 200 voting stations were surrounded by violent opposition members. Because of this, alternate voting stations had to be set-up. Attacks were also carried out against government security forces deployed to protect the voting stations; the Interior Ministry has reported that 21 state security personnel were wounded with gunshots, in addition to the murder of National Guard Second Sergeant Ronald Ramirez in Tachira State. At least nine other people were killed that day. There was also a bombing attack directed against a police motorcycle envoy. The bombs went off as the police drove through a pro-opposition neighborhood in Caracas, injuring eight officers.

The right-wing campaign to stop the Constituent Assembly elections also extended beyond the borders of Venezuela. In the days leading up to the elections, both the government of the United States and the government of Canada demanded that Venezuela cancel the elections. The US even threatened to impose further sanctions, a direct violation of the people of Venezuela's sovereignty and self-determination.

Within the Organization of American States (OAS), United States government, Canada, Mexico and their allies attempted to get the regional body to issue a formal condemnation of the Constituent Assembly. However, their efforts failed, just like so many other attempts by the imperialists to use the OAS to promote intervention in the internal affairs of Venezuela.

**What About Allegations of Fraud by Venezuela's Opposition and Their Foreign Allies?**

This was the 21<sup>st</sup> time that elections were held as part of the Bolivarian revolutionary process that began with the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998. Out of these 21 elections, two were considered a loss for the Bolivarian revolution, the most recent being the 2015 parliamentary elections in which Venezuela's opposition won a majority of the seats.

The two times that elections in Venezuela were in favour of the opposition, imperialist governments and their capitalist media machine were silent about the results. For the other 18 elections that brought about advancement in the Bolivarian revolutionary process, these same governments and the mainstream media were quick with their allegations of fraud, irregularities and rigging. This was no different for the Constituent Assembly elections on July 30. In fact, immediately following the elections, the US government took their threats one step further, and President Trump imposed sanctions directly on President Maduro.

The imperialist and right-wing allegations against the July 30 elections are, however not based in fact. Instead of relying on data from the electronic voting machines used in the elections (which by the way use finger-prints to identify voters), mainstream media sources like the New York Times are instead quoting so-called "independent" election observers (like the investment bank Tornio Capital) and the observations of unnamed reporters in the country.

An audit of the Constituent Assembly election is also set to be carried out to further verify the results, but imperialist governments are not waiting in on this before continuing their attacks against President Maduro and the Bolivarian revolution. This is another sign that the allegations of fraud and rigging are baseless. They speak of "democracy" in Venezuela, but what they really mean is "democracy" for Venezuela's violent opposition and capitalist class. The reaction of the US representative to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, says it all "Maduro's sham election is another step toward dictatorship. We won't accept an illegitimate govt. The Venezuelan people and democracy will prevail."



**Right-wing violent protester aims a pistol at Venezuelan government forces as the Constituent Assembly election was being carried out in Caracas, Venezuela, July 30, 2017.**

## Right-wing Plebiscite in Venezuela – Exactly What the US Government and Their Allies Were Looking For

On Sunday, July 17, Venezuela's opposition organized another vote, what they referred to as a "plebiscite." This "plebiscite" was essentially a non-binding referendum called by the right-wing opposition, with no recognition by Venezuela's democratically elected government or the National Electoral Council, and no Constitutional recognition. Despite this, the opposition went ahead with the voting with the full support of the government of the United States and their allies, and received wide-spread recognition as the "voice of the people of Venezuela" in mainstream capitalist media.

### So, What Was This Opposition "Plebiscite" All about?

As reported by Al Jazeera, the three questions on the ballot (which were supposed to be answered with a 'Yes' or a 'No') were:

1. Do you reject and ignore the realization of a Constituent Assembly proposed by Nicolas Maduro without the prior approval of the Venezuelan people?
2. Do you demand that the National Armed Forces and all public officials obey and defend the Constitution of 1999 and support the decisions of the National Assembly?
3. Do you approve the renewal of public powers in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, and the holding of free and transparent elections, as well as the formation of a government of national unity to restore constitutional order?

Instead of being organized by the government and Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE), it was organized by a coalition of Venezuela's right-wing opposition. In contrast to the Constituent Assembly vote which took three months to prepare, this vote was organized in just two weeks, after being announced on July 3.

Anyone over the age of 18 could vote in the plebiscite, including people living outside of Venezuela.

### What Were the Results?

The opposition reported that 7 million people voted in the referendum. There are however, a number of significant irregularities that have been reported about this number.

For example, the opposition has reported that 693,000 votes were cast abroad, while only about 101,000 voters live outside of Venezuela. There are also basic problems exposed by mathematical analysis that make 7 million votes impossible.

As reported by Ryan Mallett-Outtrim of venezuelaanalysis.com "According to the pro-opposition newspaper El Nacional, on Sunday the opposition organized roughly 2000 voting centers nationwide, with a total of 14,800 individual booths. That means that on election day, each booth must have received an average of 485 votes. Yet the voting centers were only open for nine hours, from 7am to 4pm. That means each booth had to receive 54 ballots per hour: that's around one every minute."

Unlike the Constituent Assembly election, the opposition has also made an audit of the results impossible as the ballots have already been burned from some states.

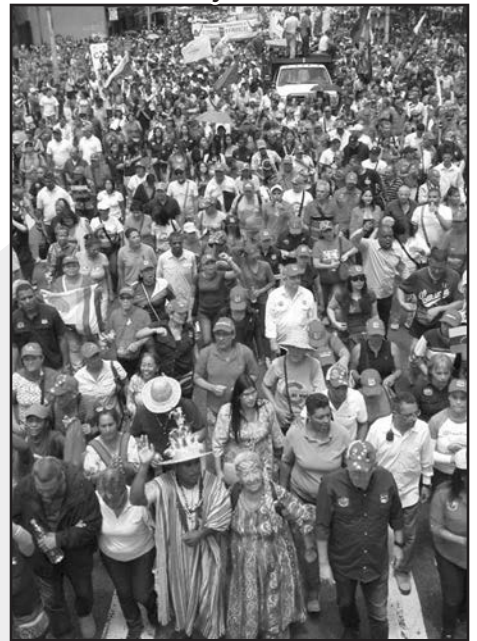
Some of the irregularities in the number of votes might be explained by repeat voting. A teleSUR investigative report conducted during the unconstitutional referendum revealed that one person was able to vote three times.

### "This is What Democracy Looks Like"?

On the eve of the Constituent Assembly election in Venezuela, US Vice-President Mike Pence made a phone call to Leopoldo Lopez, a leader in Venezuela's violent, counter-revolutionary opposition. Mr. Lopez had recently been let out of prison, and was under house arrest, for his role in inciting street riots in 2013 that killed 43 people.

In his phone call to this convicted criminal,

## Indigenous people lead the celebrations of the triumph of the National Constituent Assembly in Caracas, Venezuela.



However, Mr. Pence, you forgot that those "free and fair" elections were just about to happen. Left with a choice between an election that was constitutionally recognized and verifiable, and a referendum that was neither of these things, the US government and their allies have chosen the latter.

Once again, imperialist lies, manipulations and intervention in Venezuela are exposed. The US government and their allies do not care about "democracy" or "legitimate" elections

in Venezuela, as much as they do not care about the hundreds of people that have been killed in Venezuela by the violent opposition that they support. Together with Venezuela's violent right-wing opposition, their only interest is in overthrowing the government of Venezuela and reversing the gains of the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

Increasing US and imperialist intervention and sanctions are preparation for further, and more aggressive attacks. As the people of Venezuela continue to build the Bolivarian revolutionary process,

and defend their rights to sovereignty and self-determination, international solidarity is needed now more than ever before.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro celebrating the Constituent Assembly election results.

Vice President Pence gave Leopoldo Lopez words of support and encouragement, reminding him that the US government had demanded that the government of Venezuela cancel the Constituent Assembly elections and hold a US-supported, opposition led version of "free and fair elections" in Venezuela.

Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:  
@Alisoncolette



# "Colonialism is a crime against all of humanity" - OSCAR LÓPEZ RIVERA SPEECH AT THE UN

**"What has United States colonialism done to Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican people? Allow me to share with you some of the most deleterious problems caused by colonialism in Puerto Rico that I have observed since my arrival in my beloved homeland."**



Oscar López speaking at UN Special Committee on Decolonization, June 19, 2017



Oscar López honoured at the New York Puerto Rican Day Parade, June 11, 2017

*On May 17, 2017 Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera was finally freed from US jails after spending near 36 years behind bars. As Puerto Rican independence fighter and member of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional – FALN), Oscar was arrested in 1981, and charged and convicted of “seditious conspiracy to oppose the legitimate authority of the United States government in Puerto Rico by force.”*

*For this conspiracy charge, and other minor charges, such as transporting stolen vehicles across state lines, Oscar was sentenced to an outrageous 55 years. As a political prisoner, Oscar also faced continuous punishment and abuse within US prisons, including 12 years that he spent in confinement, where he was denied not only contact with other humans, but also tortured with sensory and sleep deprivation, spending 22.5 hours a day in a prison cell 6' wide and 9' long.*

*Oscar López Rivera was the last of the Puerto Rican political prisoners to be released from US jails. His freedom came only after years of strong campaigning by people in the United States and internationally, who fought for the*

*freedom of Oscar and his fellow Puerto Rican independence fighters unjustly held in US jails.*

*On June 19, 2017 Oscar López Rivera spoke in front of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. He spoke about his experiences as political prisoner in the United States, as well as about his observations on the disastrous situation imposed on Puerto Rico by the US's criminal colonization. Importantly, Oscar also brought to light the cases of other political prisoners held in US jails, including that of Ana Belén Montes.*

*From behind US prison bars, Oscar López Rivera was a strong example of how human dignity can survive and even grow even in the most horrible of conditions. Now that he is free, Oscar López Rivera has continued to lead the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico.*

*- Alison Bodine*

By Oscar López Rivera

Honorable members of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization:

It is a great honor for me to be able to stand before you and to express my heartfelt gratitude for every resolution this August

body has passed supporting Puerto Rico's right to be an independent and sovereign nation and the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Venezuelan citizens and their President Hugo Chávez Frías and President Nicolás Maduro, President Daniel Ortega and the citizens of Nicaragua, President Evo Morales and the citizens of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, President José “Pepe” Mujica and the President Tabaré Vázquez and the citizens of Uruguay, President Rafael Correa and President Lenin Moreno and the citizens of Ecuador, President Fidel Castro Ruz and President Raúl Castro Ruz, the Five Cuban Heroes René González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González Llort and the citizens of Cuba for the support they have given to the just and noble cause of my beloved Puerto Rico's right to be an independent and sovereign nation and to be part of the community of nations.

On the 17th of May of this year, I was finally released from prison. Had it been the 29th

# Humanity is Diversity



Jornada Cubana  
**CONTRA**  
la **HOMOFOBIA**  
Y LA **TRANSFOBIA**



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of May, I would have been in prison for 36 years – almost half of my life. During those years, the resolutions that this Honorable Committee passed were always a fountain of hope and strength for me. I would read them and would find in them precious expressions of solidarity and compassion, and it would make me feel that someday Puerto Rico would be decolonized and a free and sovereign nation like the ones you represent here.

I have spent five decades serving what I believe is the most just and noble cause any Puerto Rican citizen can serve. Doing it has been an act of love and fulfilling my duty as a citizen. And because I believe that when one serves a just and noble cause, it is never a sacrifice, even if it means giving one's life doing it. I say this to let people know that for me, serving a just and noble cause has been the most liberating experience I have had, and that in spite of all the horrible things done to me during the years I spent in prison, I have come home with my head high, and my honor, my dignity and my spirit stronger than the day I was sent to prison.

Thanks to the support this Committee has given to the Puerto Rican political prisoners and the support of hundreds of thousands of freedom and justice loving people of Puerto Rico, of the Puerto Rican diaspora and of many nations in the world, there are no more Puerto Rican political prisoners in the gulags of the U.S. government. Unfortunately, there are many other political prisoners inside the Prison Industrial Complex of the U.S. And there is one Puerto Rican woman, Ana Belén Montes, who chose to serve a just cause and go to prison rather than to do the dirty work of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. She is serving a 25 year sentence and battling cancer. But according to the U.S. government there aren't any political prisoners in the U.S.

While the U.S. government alleges there aren't any political prisoners in its gulags or terrorists on its payroll, it claims there are many in countries it doesn't like. I found it interesting that its partners in crime in Puerto Rico condemned me for speaking with President Maduro the day I was released from prison and asking him to release the prisoners in Venezuela they consider to be political prisoners. I am certain that the prisoners the U.S. government considers to be political

would never entertain the idea of asking the U.S. government to release all the political prisoners in U.S. or in Guantánamo. And much less would they ask the U.S. to bring to justice the terrorists on its payroll who have killed independentistas in Puerto Rico or to stop practicing the crime of colonialism and allow the Puerto Rican people to exercise its inalienable right of self-determination and allow Puerto Rico to be an independent and sovereign nation.

What has United States colonialism done to Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican people? Allow me to share with you some of the most deleterious problems caused by colonialism in Puerto Rico that I have observed since my arrival in my beloved homeland. Today there are over five million Puerto Ricans living in the diaspora, while there are less than three and a half million living in Puerto Rico. I found a Puerto Rico under the control of a Fiscal Control Board imposed by the U.S. government that has the power to dictate to the colonialists who help to administer the colony, what to do, especially when dealing with the payment of the \$72 billion debt Puerto Rico owes to the banks and hedge funds. And I have seen an accelerated gentrification process constructing condominiums costing one million dollars or more.

Since I am familiar with what gentrification does to poor people, I know the luxury condominiums are not being built for them. The poor people are displaced; once the expensive housing is built, only the rich and super rich can live there. In Culebra, Vieques and around the coast of Puerto Rico, where

the beaches are the most beautiful, the construction of luxury buildings is already overtaking the landscape. The colonizers who administer the colony give incentives to the builders and to buyers who are foreigners, and denies providing incentives to small businesses and small home owners. On the contrary, the small businesses and small home owners are taxed to the maximum. So what gentrification is doing is forcing poor people to move, and most likely to emigrate to the diaspora. This will cause more depopulation in Puerto Rico.

It has been the goal of the U.S. government, since it invaded and occupied Puerto Rico, to depopulate it. By 1900 it was already forcing Puerto Ricans to emigrate to faraway places like Hawaii and the southwestern states on the mainland. After World War II the United States government started another forced emigration wave. More of the land that the poor Puerto Ricans were forced to abandon was used for military bases and for the construction of luxury hotels to foment a tourist industry. And the last wave began 17 years ago. More than one million Puerto Ricans have moved to the diaspora, causing the biggest brain drain in Puerto Rico's history, because most of the emigrants are professionals, such as doctors, engineers, teachers, architects, nurses and other health workers. If the School of Medicine in Puerto Rico graduates 100 doctors, 85% of them have to emigrate. There aren't jobs for most young professionals. Their only option is to emigrate.

Imagine if such a loss of population were occurring in your countries. Any country



Protest gainst cutbacks and austerity measures forced onto Puerto Rico by US banks.

that loses two-thirds of its population, including its best-developed human resource, cannot see itself having a strong economy and good quality of life for its citizens. And in Puerto Rico we are starting to see the negative effects of the last wave of emigrants. We are already seeing a larger aging population that is becoming poorer and poorer and with less medical and social services available to them. The future for them looks bleak. And at the same time young people of reproductive age are leaving Puerto Rico, and more foreigners are buying the expensive condominiums or living in enclosed upper class communities.

If the displacement and depopulation of Puerto Ricans is an alarming problem, what the Fiscal Control Board is making the colonialist administrators of Puerto Rico do is more worrisome. For starters, by August



Huge rally in San Juan, Puerto Rico as part of student strike against austerity. April 6, 2017

169 schools will be closed. Teachers will be losing jobs, and communities, especially the poorer ones, will be losing their schools. Behind the scenes the colonialists are pushing more and more their privatization plans. They aren't satisfied that privatization in Puerto Rico has played a major role in bringing the economy to its worse conditions in Puerto Rico's history.

But besides closing 169 schools, it is threatening the future of the University of Puerto Rico. The goal of the Fiscal Control Board is to take away close to half a billion dollars from the University's budget. At the same time, it is looking for ways to raise the tuition and to force the University of Puerto Rico to close some of its eleven campuses and to sell much of its property, specially land that it has been using for experiments in the past. What the Fiscal Control Board seems to be doing is trying to privatize the University system. All the money that will be taken away from the public education system will be used as payment to fill the coffers of the Banks and hedge funds. While Puerto Ricans will be poorer and more destitute, the colonialists and the banking industry will become richer. Thus Puerto

Rico is being made poorer and poorer and at the same time depopulated of its native population.

In spite of the fact that the future of Puerto Rico looks very bleak, many Puerto Ricans believe this is the best moment to wage an effective decolonizing process. We know that the majority of Puerto Ricans love Puerto Rico, our national identity, our culture, our language, and our origins. We see the potential that Puerto Rico has to become a strong nation and an asset to the economy of Caribbean and Latin American countries. We have the human resources and the other basic resources to transform Puerto Rico into the Garden of Eden it has the potential of being.

Because this is such a moment, we are asking this Committee to take the issue of the decolonization of Puerto Rico to the General Assembly and ask it to fulfill its responsibilities to bring to an end the colonization of Puerto Rico by the U.S. government.

Colonialism is a crime against all of humanity. If the U.S. government is the nation of laws it claims to be, then it behooves it to decolonize Puerto Rico by adhering to the tenets of international law that prohibit the crime of colonialism.

I hope you will do whatever you can to bring to an end the colonial status of Puerto Rico, to help us make Puerto Rico the nation it has the potential of being, and to be part of the community of nations.

Thank you. En resistencia y lucha siempre,  
Oscar López Rivera





# US/CANADA HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!

**#VAMOSALACONSTITUYENTE!**

**ALL OUT FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY!**

**FIRE THIS TIME MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL  
JUSTICE-VENEZUELA SOLIDARITY  
CAMPAIGN STATEMENT**

**JULY 30, 2017 VANCOUVER, CANADA**

On May 1, 2017 the President of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro called for the formation of a National Constituent Assembly in order to improve and broaden Venezuela's Constitution and strengthen the Bolivarian revolutionary process. Over the last three months, in the face of increasing right-wing violence, the majority of people in Venezuela, in the millions have mobilized and organized as part of this profound democratic and constitutionally recognized process.

As Venezuelans go to the polls today,

they are doing so amidst a right-wing campaign of violence and terror which has killed over 100 people and injured at least 1200 in the last four months. Just last night Constituent Assembly candidate Jose Felix Pineda was shot to death in his home. Through assassinations, murder, arson, theft, and other dangerous and destructive actions, these pro-US mercenaries are attempting to put an end to the National Constituent Assembly process and scare the people of Venezuela away from voting in the election. Their ultimate goal is to overthrow the democratically elected government of Nicolas Maduro.

In the weeks before the July 30 elections, the governments of the US and Canada both released statements demanding that Venezuela government cancel the National Constituent Assembly elections. Important to know that both governments of the US and Canada support the opposition including Venezuela's violent right-wing demonstrators.

On July 26, 2017 the US government further escalated their attacks by announcing increased sanctions against Venezuela. Chrystia Freeland, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, immediately voiced her approval of this despicable action. The governments

of the U.S. and Canada have no right to intervene in the internal affairs of Venezuela by undermining and violating their self-determination and sovereignty.

The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign condemns all US sanctions against Venezuela, and this campaign of violence and terror carried out by the Venezuelan opposition and their imperialist allies. The people of Venezuela have a right to carry out their National Constituent Assembly in an environment free from violence and foreign intervention.

We call on all poor, working and oppressed people around the world to defend the people of Venezuela, the Constituent Assembly, and the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution. Now it is more important than ever that we come together and unite to demand:

- No to Regime Change in Venezuela**
- US/Canada Hands Off Venezuela!**
- President Trump Repeal the Executive Order Against Venezuela Now!**
- US and Canada, Respect the Sovereignty and Self-Determination of the Venezuelan People!**
- Long Live the Venezuelan Bolivarian Process**

## VANCOUVER SOLIDARITY ACTIVISTS SUPPORT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN VENEZUELA

*By Alison Bodine*

In the days leading up to the National Constituent Assembly vote in Venezuela, the government of the US and the government of Canada both released statements demanding that the vote be cancelled. These outrageous statements, which also included US government threats for further sanctions, signified an escalation in imperialist intervention in Venezuela's internal affairs.

It was this mind that people in support of the Constituent Assembly and the sovereignty and self-determination of Venezuela came to the streets of Vancouver for a solidarity action on Sunday, July 30 organized by the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign. In fact, by the time the action in Vancouver began, people in Venezuela had already begun voting

for the 545 members of the National Assembly that are now tasked with improving and broadening the Venezuelan Constitution.

### **Rally**

The rally began with dynamic greetings direct from Venezuela. The first message came from Estela Vazquez, Executive Vice President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 1199 in New York City, who was in Venezuela as an international observer of the National Constituent Assembly elections. Estela emphasized the importance of international solidarity with Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution. She was followed by Christina Schiavoni, a Venezuela solidarity activist from the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle in NYC, currently living and researching in Caracas, Venezuela. Christina described the atmosphere of voting day in Venezuela as energetic and positive,



Rally supporting the Constituent Assembly in Venezuela. Sign says, "Venezuela Respects Itself, Yankee Go Home!"

despite the multiple attacks carried out by the violent opposition that day. Participants at the rally also heard from Brian Sproule (CPC-ML) and Tamara Hansen, Coordinator, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC).

As the protest ended, the first results from the Constituent Assembly elections came in, showing that over 8 million people had voted. This is a tremendous victory for the people of

Venezuela, President Maduro and the Bolivarian revolutionary process!

However, this victory in no way means neither the end of the violent right-wing attacks in Venezuela nor an end to imperialist intervention in Venezuela. The ultimate goal of the counter-revolutionary opposition and their imperialist allies is to overthrow the democratically elected President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, and reverse the gains of the Bolivarian revolution.

#### A New Petition

As part of the solidarity action on July 30, the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign also launched a new petition demanding "Canada Hands Off Venezuela!" This petition targets the Foreign Minister of Canada, Chrystia Freeland, whom recently released shameful and interventionist statements demanding that the government of Venezuela cancel the Constituent Assembly elections, and in support of US sanctions against Venezuela.

The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign will continue to organize monthly Venezuela solidarity actions. We must continue to come together and unite to defend Venezuela in the face of increasing attacks by the governments of United States and their imperialist allies, and continued right-wing violence and terror!

For more information about the Fire This

Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign go to [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net) or follow @FTT\_np on Twitter.

**US and Canada Respect the Sovereignty and Self-Determination of the Venezuelan People!**

**No to Regime Change in Venezuela!**

**No to Right-Wing Violence!**



Rally in Caracas to celebrate and support the Constituent Assembly as it is sworn in. August 4, 2017

## CONGRATULATIONS TO VENEZUELA ON ITS SUCCESSFUL CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS!

### FIRE THIS TIME MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE - VENEZUELA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

**JULY 31, 2017**

- > No to US/Canada Threats and Interference!
- > No to Right-Wing Violence!
- > Yes to President Maduro, the Bolivarian Revolution and the Venezuelan People!

The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice -Venezuela Solidarity Campaign congratulates the Venezuelan people for their overwhelmingly successful Constituent Assembly vote yesterday. The massive turnout of over 8 million people was a clear demonstration that they were not intimidated by a US-backed campaign of violence and threats, and that the heroic masses of Venezuela continue to mobilize together in defence of their dignity and self-determination. The successful Constituent Assembly vote was definitely a significant step forward for the Bolivarian Revolution led by democratically elected President

Nicolas Maduro.

We condemn the bloody right-wing protests which attempted to disrupt the Constituent Assembly process, including the murder of candidate Jose Felix Pineda the night before the election. Despite this, polling stations were so busy that they stayed open later than scheduled, and a high voter turnout chose 545 members of the Constituent Assembly from 6,120 candidates.

Speaking to a large crowd following the successful vote, President Maduro reflected on the significance of this victory. "It's when imperialism challenges us that we prove ourselves worthy of the blood of the liberators that runs through the veins of men, women, children and young people...We don't care what Trump says, we care about what our people say."

We also condemn the new U.S. sanctions against Venezuela announced this week, and the bizarre and hostile move to impose sanctions directly on Venezuela's democratically elected head of state, Nicolas Maduro. Shamefully, the government of Canada is also escalating its belligerent and interventionist attacks on Venezuela. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, issued a statement following the successful vote, claiming that "this constituent assembly

will further escalate tensions in the country by robbing the Venezuelan people of their fundamental democratic rights."

But who is really escalating tensions and who is really enabling the people's fundamental democratic rights? Canada and the U.S. can try and fabricate whatever alternate reality of lies they want, but it does not change the facts on the ground and the success of this vote. They also have no right to intervene in the internal affairs of Venezuela.

Today we are celebrating with the Venezuelan people, who stood strong and voted in the Constituent Assembly, and with Nicolas Maduro and the leadership of the Bolivarian Revolution. We look forward to new positive developments and the strengthening of the Bolivarian Revolution through the Constituent Assembly. We call on all peaceloving people around the world to continue to defend Venezuela against imperialist intervention and right-wing attacks.

- > **No to Regime Change in Venezuela!**
- > **US/Canada Hands Off Venezuela!**
- > **President Trump Repeal the Executive Order Against Venezuela Now!**
- > **US and Canada, Respect the Sovereignty and Self-Determination of the Venezuelan People!**



# ¡FELICITACIONES A VENEZUELA POR SU EXITOSA ASAMBLEA CONSTITUYENTE!

## LA CAMPAÑA DE SOLIDARIDAD CON VENEZUELA DEL MOVIMIENTO POR LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL "FIRE THIS TIME"

LUNES, 31 DE JULIO DE 2017

¡No a la interferencia y amenazas de Estados Unidos y Canadá!  
¡No a la violencia de la derecha!  
¡Sí al presidente Maduro, la Revolución Bolivariana y el pueblo venezolano!

La Campaña de Solidaridad con Venezuela del Movimiento Fire This Time por la Justicia Social felicita al pueblo venezolano por su abrumadoramente exitoso voto por la Asamblea Constituyente ayer. La comparecencia masiva de más de ocho millones de personas fue una clara demostración de que no fueron intimidados por la campaña de violencia y amenazas apoyadas por Estados Unidos, y las heroicas masas de Venezuela continúan movilizándose juntas en defensa de su dignidad y autodeterminación. El exitoso voto en la Asamblea Constituyente fue definitivamente un significativo paso de avance para la Revolución

Bolivariana encabezada por el presidente electo democráticamente Nicolás Maduro.

Condenamos las sangrientas protestas de la derecha que intentan desestabilizar el proceso de la Asamblea Constituyente, incluyendo el asesinato del candidato José Félix Pineda, la noche previa a la elección. A pesar de ello, las estaciones de votaciones estuvieron tan concurridas que permanecieron abiertas luego de la hora programada, y una mayor participación en los votos escogió a 545 miembros de la Asamblea Constituyente de 6,120 candidatos.

Dirigiéndose a una amplia multitud luego del voto exitoso, el Presidente Maduro reflexionó sobre el significado de esta victoria: "Es cuando el imperialismo nos desafía que demostramos que somos dignos de la sangre de los libertadores que recorre las venas de hombres, mujeres, niños y jóvenes ... ¡A nosotros qué carajo



Manifestaciones en apoyo de la nueva asamblea constituyente en Caracas, Venezuela



nos importa lo que diga Trump! Aquí nos importa lo que digan los venezolanos."

También condenamos las sanciones de Estados Unidos contra Venezuela anunciadas esta semana, y las sospechosas y hostiles acciones para impulsar sanciones directas contra el presidente electo democráticamente Nicolás Maduro. Desgraciadamente, el gobierno de

Canadá también está escalando sus ataques beligerantes e intervencionistas ataque hacia Venezuela. Chrystia Freeland, Ministra de Asuntos exteriores, emitió una declaración luego del voto, declarando que "esta asamblea constituyente aumentará las tensiones en el país al robar al pueblo venezolano sus derechos democráticos fundamentales."

Pero ¿quién realmente está aumentando las tensiones y quién está dando al pueblo los derechos democráticos? Canadá y Estados Unidos pueden intentar fabricar cualquier realidad alternativa de mentiras que deseen, pero no cambia los hechos de que en el terreno y el éxito de esta votación. Igualmente, no tienen derecho

de intervenir en los asuntos internos de Venezuela.

Hoy celebramos junto al pueblo venezolano, que resistió y votó en la Asamblea Constituyente, y con Nicolás Maduro y el liderazgo de la Revolución Bolivariana. Esperamos nuevos y positivos hechos y el fortalecimiento de la Revolución Bolivariana a través de la Asamblea Constituyente. Convocamos a los amantes de la paz en el mundo a seguir defendiendo a Venezuela contra la intervención imperialista y los ataques derechistas.

> ¡NO AL CAMBIO DE RÉGIMEN EN VENEZUELA!

> ¡EE.UU. Y CANADÁ SAQUEN SUS MANOS DE VENEZUELA!

> ¡PRESIDENTE TRUMP REVOQUE LA ORDEN EJECUTIVA CONTRA VENEZUELA AHORA!

> ¡EE.UU. Y CANADÁ, RESPETEN LA SOBERANÍA Y AUTODETERMINACIÓN DEL PUEBLO VENEZOLANO!

Traducido por: Reynaldo Cruz Díaz

*Por Manuel Yepe*

Para el imperialismo estadounidense y la derecha continental, lo ocurrido el 30 de julio en Venezuela debía ser una concluyente lección política y debía serlo también para los organizadores de las abrumadoras campañas mediáticas contra los procesos populares, cuya falibilidad ha sido demostrada por el ejercicio masivo de sus derechos por una población madura y decidida que las rechaza.

La elección ese día de los integrantes de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente (ANC), conforme a la Constitución y las leyes del país, involucró una participación entusiasta de más de 8 millones 89 mil 230 venezolanos y venezolanas – 41.53% del padrón electoral– que dijo sí a la constituyente y a la revolución bolivariana.

El Presidente de Estados Unidos, había amenazado a los venezolanos con un incremento de las sanciones económicas contra el país suramericano si llegara a realizarse el evento, sin duda partiendo de la suposición de que el pueblo, amedrentado, repudiaría el acto democrático absteniéndose de participar en él. Pero resultó todo lo contrario, la amenaza de Trump y las acciones terroristas contra los votantes estimularon la asistencia de éstos, porque le agregaron motivaciones patrióticas.

El gobierno bolivariano llamó a los pueblos democráticos y amantes de la paz a estar alertas frente a esta nueva escalada injerencista del imperialismo norteamericano y a rechazar categóricamente las acciones violentas, fascistas, racistas y criminales de la oposición venezolana que tanto temen al acto democrático, legal, soberano, pacífico y civilizado.

Por su parte, el colérico presidente estadounidense, quien se ha visto obligado a mover todas sus fichas al mismo tiempo por coincidir en tiempo con otros serios enfrentamientos desatados separadamente contra Rusia y con la República Democrática Popular de Corea, ha hecho que Washington se haya limitado a imponer sanciones al presidente de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, según comunicado del Departamento del Tesoro estadounidense.

El comunicado especifica que se bloquearán todos los activos del mandatario que estén o puedan estar bajo la jurisdicción de EE.UU. Además, se prohibirá a los ciudadanos estadounidenses contraer cualquier acuerdo con Maduro quien a su vez ha reiterado que, como Presidente de Venezuela no tiene que rendir cuentas más que a los venezolanos y las venezolanas.

El primer mandatario venezolano ha calificado la jornada como la victoria

“mas grande” de la Revolución Bolivariana y ha basado su éxito en la selección que hizo de la propuesta de paz como su bandera de lucha en tan complejas circunstancias. Maduro destacó que hasta el último momento mantuvo las puertas abierta para la oposición venezolana, que no cesó de llamar a la violencia y a las acciones desestabilizadoras durante la jornada electoral. Reveló que una delegación de su gobierno estuvo reunida por varias semanas con dirigentes opositores, entre los que mencionó al presidente del Parlamento, Julio Borges, para intentar sumarlos a la iniciativa constituyente. “Hace dos semanas propuse a la oposición que se inscribieran en la Constituyente. Pero no aceptaron”, indicó el mandatario.

“En las últimas seis semanas se han dado conversaciones directas entre delegaciones de la Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (MUD) y una delegación presidida por Jorge Rodríguez, Delcy Rodríguez y Elias Jaau”, anunció este sábado el jefe de Estado, Nicolás Maduro. “Estuvimos a punto de llegar a un acuerdo para publicar un comunicado aprobado por todos los partidos de la MUD”, aseguró el Primer Mandatario y añadió que la cúpula de la derecha “lo que quería era inscribirse ante el Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) para las elecciones de gobernadores y governoras. Los llamé a que se metieran en la Constituyente y tuvieron miedo”. Las reuniones llevadas a cabo se mantuvieron ocultas por solicitud del sector opositor.

Durante su discurso en la Plaza Bolívar de la ciudad de Caracas, luego de que el Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) emitió el primer boletín de resultados, el mandatario venezolano afirmó que la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente nació en medio de una gran legitimidad popular. “No sólo tiene la fuerza constituyente nacional, sino que tiene la fuerza de la legitimidad, la fuerza moral de un pueblo que de manera heroica, en condiciones de guerra, salió a votar, a decir: queremos paz, tranquilidad”, aseguró Maduro.

“La Constituyente recién electa contó con el apoyo de un pueblo que no se sintió intimidado ante el clima desestabilizador que pretendía implantar la oposición venezolana. Es la votación más grande que haya sacado la Revolución en toda la historia electoral. El que tenga ojos que vea y el que tenga oídos que oiga”, aseveró el presidente. Julio 31 de 2017.

*Manuel E. Yepe Menendez es periodista y se desempeña como Profesor adjunto en el Instituto Superior de las Relaciones Internacionales de La Habana.*

# VENEZUELA RECHAZÓ LA VIOLENCIA





# VENEZUELA REJECTS VIOLENCE

By Manuel Yepe

For US imperialism and the continental right, July 30th in Venezuela should be a conclusive political lesson. It should also be a lesson for the organizers of the media campaigns against popular processes. Their reliability has been demonstrated by the mass exercise of their rights by a mature and determined population who rejects them. The election on that day of the members of the Constituent National Assembly (ANC), according to the Constitution and the laws of the country, involved an enthusiastic participation of more than 8,090,230 Venezuelans —41.53% of the electoral roll— who said yes to Constituent Assembly and the Bolivarian revolution.

The President of the United States threatened the Venezuelans with an increase in economic sanctions. The election would certainly take place, no doubt assuming that the people, intimidated, would repudiate the democratic act and refrain from participating in it.

But, on the contrary, Trump's threats and terrorist actions against the voters stimulated their attendance because patriotic motivation was added.

The Bolivarian government called on democratic and peace-loving people to be alert to this new

interventionist escalation of US imperialism. They called for a categorical rejection of the violent, fascist, racist and criminal actions of the Venezuelan opposition who are so afraid of this democratic, legal, sovereign, peaceful and civilized act.

For his part, the angry American president, who has been forced to move all his chips at the same time to coincide with other serious clashes unleashed separately against Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This has led Washington to impose sanctions on Venezuelan President, Nicolás Maduro, according to a statement from the US Treasury Department.

The statement specifies that all assets of



**Diosdado Cabello, Cilia Flores and Delcy Rodríguez, central leaders of the Bolivarian Revolution at the inauguration of National Constituent Assembly, August 4th, 2017.**

President Maduro which are or may be under US jurisdiction will be frozen. In addition, US citizens will be prohibited from any agreement with Maduro. He, in turn, has reiterated that, as President of Venezuela, he does not have to answer to anyone but Venezuela's women and men. The Venezuelan president has described the day [of the election] as the "biggest" of the Bolivarian Revolution and has based its success on the option that made the peace proposal his banner of struggle in such complex circumstances.

Maduro stressed that, until the last moment, he kept the doors open for the Venezuelan opposition, which did not cease to call for violence and destabilizing actions on election day. He revealed that a delegation of his government had been meeting for several weeks with opposition leaders. Among these he mentioned the President of the Parliament, Julio Borges, to try to add them to the constituent assembly initiative. "Two weeks ago I proposed to the opposition that they register for the Constituent Assembly. But they did not accept," said the leader.

"In the last six weeks, there have been direct talks between the delegations of

the Democratic Unity Roundtable and a delegation presided over by Jorge Rodríguez, Delcy Rodríguez and Elías Jaua," head of state Nicolás Maduro announced Saturday.

To reach an agreement to publish a statement approved by all parties of the MUD," said the First Minister. He added that the leadership of the right "wanted to be registered before the National Electoral Council (CNE) for the elections of governors and governors. I called on them to get into the Constituent Assembly and they were afraid." The meetings held were kept hidden at the request of the opposition sector.

President Maduro spoke at Bolívar Plaza in the city of Caracas, after the National Electoral Council (CNE) issued the first bulletin with results. The Venezuelan president stated that the Constituent National Assembly had been born amid great popular legitimacy. "Not only does the Constituyente have power, but it has the strength of legitimacy, the moral force of a people who heroically, warlike, came out to vote, to say: we want peace and tranquility," said Maduro.

"The newly-elected Constituent Assembly had the support of a people who were not intimidated by the destabilizing climate that the Venezuelan opposition intended to create. It is the largest vote that the Revolution has had in all electoral history. The one who has eyes that sees and the one who has ears that hear," said the president. - July 31, 2017.

*Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba's ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; founder and national director of the Technological Information System (TIPS) of the United Nations Program for Development in Cuba, and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples.*

# ☆ Statement ☆ FIRE THIS TIME ☆ Declaración ☆

July 20 - 2017 - 20 de Julio

## *In Solidarity with the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution and Against U.S Attacks*



## *En solidaridad con la Revolución Bolivariana de Venezuela y contra los ataques de EE.UU.*



Ever since the election of Comandante Hugo Chavez in 1998, the US government and their allies have been attempting to overthrow the government of Venezuela and reverse the gains made by poor, working and oppressed people in the Bolivarian Revolution. Now under US President Trump they are putting their plans into overdrive—but facing strong resistance.

US-backed, violent anti-government protestors have become increasingly dangerous and destructive. Over the last two months over 90 people have been killed in Venezuela and over 1200 people have been injured as a result of a destabilization campaign by Venezuela's violent opposition. These mercenaries have committed murder, arson, and theft, among other dangerous crimes and terrorist actions all with the objective of overthrowing the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro.

In the face of these increasing attacks by Venezuela's counter-revolutionary opposition, President Nicolas Maduro has called for a National Constituent Assembly to strengthen the Bolivarian revolution and constitution. On July 30, people in Venezuela will go the polls to elect this National Constituent Assembly.

On July 17, US President Trump released a ridiculous and inflammatory statement which threatened that, "If the Maduro regime imposes its Constituent Assembly on July 30, the United States will take strong and swift economic actions."

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry replied immediately, "The original constituent power is contemplated in our Constitution and it only concerns the Venezuelan people. The National Constituent Assembly will be elected by the direct, universal, and secret ballot of all Venezuelans, under the authority of the National Electoral Council, as contemplated in our legal framework. It is an act of political sovereignty of the Republic, nothing and no one can stop it. The Constituent Assembly will go on!

Today, Venezuelan people are free and will respond united against the insolent threat posed by a xenophobic and racist empire. The anti-imperialist thought of the Liberator is more valid than ever."

People in Venezuela continue to mobilize in the streets in the hundreds of thousands to defend the democratically elected government of Nicolas Maduro and the Bolivarian Revolution. Mass rallies have been held in cities across Venezuela in support of the Constituent Assembly, demanding an end to US interference and an end to right-wing violence.

Defending the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution has never been more important in Venezuela and around the world. The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign calls for increased mobilization and unity in defence of the sovereignty and self-determination of Venezuela and to demand:

- > NO TO REGIME CHANGE IN VENEZUELA!
- > U.S. HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!
- > PRESIDENT TRUMP REPEAL THE EXECUTIVE ORDER AGAINST VENEZUELA NOW!
- > U.S. AND CANADA RESPECT THE SOVEREIGNTY & SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE!
- > LONG LIVE THE VENEZUELAN BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION!

Desde la elección del Comandante Hugo Chávez en 1998, el gobierno de EE.UU. y sus aliados han estado intentando derrocar el gobierno de Venezuela y revertir los logros alcanzados por los pobres, trabajadores y oprimidos en la Revolución Bolivariana. Ahora bajo las órdenes del presidente norteamericano Donald Trump, están sobreexcitando sus planes—pero enfrentando una fuerte resistencia.

Manifestantes antigubernamentales violentos y apoyados por EE.UU. se han tornado más peligrosos y destructivos. Durante los últimos dos meses más de 90 personas han muerto en Venezuela y más de mil 200 han resultado lesionadas como resultado de la destructiva campaña desestabilizadora de la oposición venezolana. Estos mercenarios pro-norteamericanos han cometido asesinato, incendiarismo, y robo entre otros crímenes peligrosos y acciones terroristas todos con el objetivo de derrocar al gobierno electo democráticamente de Nicolás Maduro.

Ante lo crecientes ataques de la oposición contrarrevolucionaria en Venezuela, el presidente Nicolás Maduro ha convocado a la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente para fortalecer la Revolución Bolivariana y la constitución. El 30 de julio, la gente en Venezuela irá a las urnas para elegir esta Asamblea Nacional Constituyente.

El 17 de julio, el presidente Trump divulgó una declaración ridícula e inflamatoria que amenazaba que, "si el régimen de Maduro impone su Asamblea Constituyente el 30 de julio, los Estados Unidos tomará fuertes y expeditas acciones económicas."

El Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Venezuela respondió drásticamente; "El poder constituyente originario está contemplado en nuestra Carta Magna y solo compete al pueblo venezolano. La Asamblea Nacional Constituyente será electa por el voto directo, universal y secreto de todas las venezolanas y todos los venezolanos, bajo la autoridad del Consejo Nacional Electoral como lo contempla nuestro ordenamiento jurídico. Es un acto de soberanía política de la República, nada ni nadie podrá detenerla ¡La Constituyente

Va!

Hoy el pueblo venezolano es libre y responderá unido ante la insolente amenaza planteada por un imperio xenófobo y racista. El pensamiento anti-imperialista del Libertador se encuentra más vigente que nunca."

En Venezuela centenares de miles de personas continúan movilizándose en las calles para defender al gobierno democráticamente electo de Nicolás Maduro y a la Revolución Bolivariana. Marchas masivas han tenido lugar en ciudades por todo el país en apoyo a la Asamblea Constituyente demandando el fin de la injerencia norteamericana y el fin de la violencia de la derecha.

Defender los logros de la Revolución Bolivariana nunca ha sido más importante en Venezuela y todo el mundo. La Campaña de Fire This Time en Solidaridad con Venezuela convoca a una creciente movilización y unidad para defender la soberanía y autodeterminación de Venezuela y para exigir:

- > ¡NO AL CAMBIO DE RÉGIMEN EN VENEZUELA!
- > ¡EE.UU. SAQUEN SUS MANOS DE VENEZUELA!
- > ¡PRESIDENTE TRUMP REVOQUE LA ORDEN EJECUTIVA CONTRA VENEZUELA AHORA!
- > ¡EE.UU. Y CANADÁ, RESPETEN LA SOBERANÍA Y AUTODETERMINACIÓN DEL PUEBLO VENEZOLANO!
- > ¡VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN BOLIVARIANA!

Traducido por: Reynaldo Cruz Díaz

**"US Hands Off Venezuela!  
Vamos a la Constituyente!"**

**"EE.UU. quiten sus manos  
de Venezuela!  
Vamos a la Constituyente!"**



# Vancouver's Cuba Solidarity Community Celebrates the Cuban Revolution!

By Janine Solanki

Vancouver, Canada may not have Cuba's hot sunshine, but Vancouver's beautiful July weather was warm and sunny enough for celebrations and events for Cuba out in the park! In one month, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) held not one but two BBQ events at Trout Lake Park in Vancouver, bringing together communities, families and supporters of Cuba!

## July 2<sup>nd</sup>

On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, VCSC held a BBQ to kick off a fundraising campaign for the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> International Che Guevara Conference (October 27 – 29, 2017). Besides raising funds for this major event, the BBQ was also a great opportunity to talk about Cuba with those attending as well as curious park-goers who stopped by to enjoy the event and to find out more information! The event began with a welcoming song from Eagle Eyes, a Sechelt Indigenous elder, who recognized the unceded Coast Salish territories the event was taking place on. Tamara Hansen, VCSC's coordinator and MC of the event, also spoke about the effects of the US blockade on Cuba and the importance of protesting this cruel and illegal policy, especially since just last month US President Trump announced he would be reversing some of the steps towards normalizing US/Cuba relations made under the Obama administration.

Participants enjoyed the sunshine and delicious BBQ to the music of CanAmerica, a live band made up of members from across Central America, whose infectious sound attracted more people to the event. Following CanAmerica's performance, local brigadistas who had been on the 2017 Che

Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba gave a report back from the trip. Brigadistas Agripina Suarez and Janine Solanki conveyed the warmth and excitement of their recent experiences in Cuba, and how they felt even more inspired by the Cuban Revolution by the end of their trip. Along with the report back was a message from Iris Cogger in Winnipeg, Manitoba, also a brigadista and a Canadian Network on Cuba executive committee member.

To wrap up the event, as one of the many things Cuba is famous for is salsa dancing, a salsa lesson from VCSC member Janine Solanki got enthusiastic event participants up on their feet and dancing!

## July 29<sup>th</sup>

Just a few weeks later on July 29, VCSC held another BBQ celebration, this time to celebrate the anniversary of the July 26 movement and the gains of the Cuban Revolution. The event opened with a welcoming song by Eagle Eyes, and then continued with a talk from VCSC coordinator Tamara Hansen about the significance of the July 26 movement that the event was gathered to celebrate. The July 26, 1953 attack on the Moncada Garrison in Santiago, Cuba was meant to start off the Cuban Revolution, but was a military defeat for the young rebels, which included Fidel and Raul Casto. However, the July 26<sup>th</sup> movement that grew out of that defeat brought the Cuban Revolution to victory, which is why it is one of the most important days to celebrate in Cuba!

Once again participants enjoyed the tasty BBQ, and the event filled the park with the music of CanAmerica once again, as well as songs of social justice from Cree/Nishnawbe female hip hop and spoken word artist Okimaskwes. This time the event was especially exciting for the many children who attended with their families,

as they got to try swinging a bat at a piñata and collecting lots of candy!

This time the salsa lesson which wrapped up the event was taught by Janine and Jodie, and perhaps with all of these BBQs and salsa lessons Vancouver's Cuba solidarity community is improving their salsa dance skills!

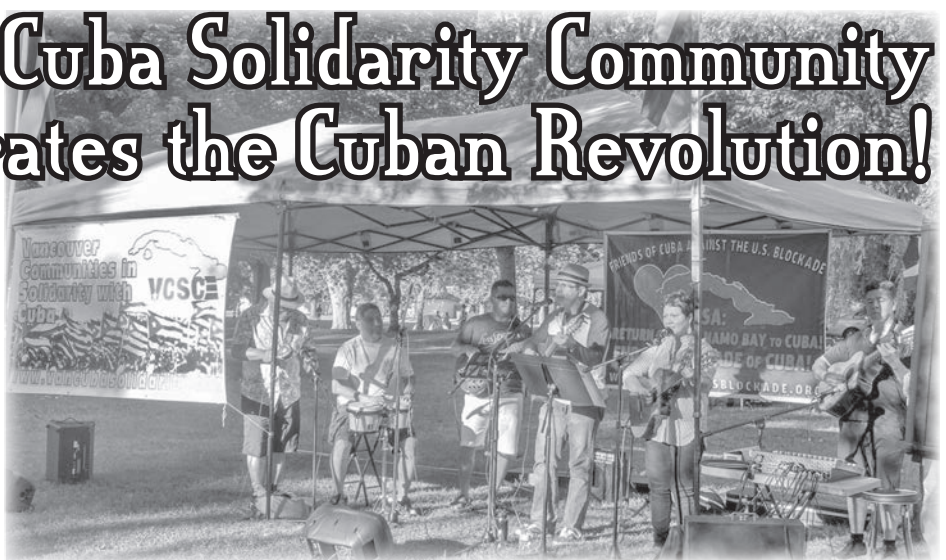
## July 30<sup>th</sup> – Poetry Event

The next day, on Sunday July 30<sup>th</sup>, VCSC joined with Proyecto Cultural Sur – Vancouver to hold a poetry event in defense of the environment and the sacred right to water. This joint event was held at the Seaforth Peace Park in Vancouver at the "Sopa Sur" monument erected by Latin American solidarity activists four year prior. The event was MC'd by Lucy Ortiz from Proyecto Cultural Sur – Vancouver and Tamara Hansen from VCSC, and was a beautiful gathering of the Latin American community and Cuba solidarity activists. Those in attendance held a toast to water and shared poetry, music and speeches about the importance of water and its many forms.

Beyond these great community events celebrating Cuba in the summer sun, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba has also been out at some of the many summer festivals in Vancouver, including having a busy information booth at the Commercial Drive Car Free Festival on July 9<sup>th</sup>. This event which sees hundreds of thousands of Vancouverites in attendance was a great opportunity to talk to more people about the gains of the Cuban Revolution!

Make sure to find out about VCSC's next events at [www.vancubasolidarity.com](http://www.vancubasolidarity.com), and find VCSC on Facebook or Twitter @VanCuba\_VCSC

Viva Cuba!



# Mobilization Against War and Occupation -MAWO Leads Anti-War Movement in Canada

By Janine Solanki

Some of the worst, record-breaking humanitarian crises are taking place in the world right now, and it is not just a stroke of chance behind this immense human suffering. Humanity is still experiencing the largest refugee crisis in human history, due to war. The countries with some of the largest numbers of refugees, namely Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, are countries that have bore the brunt of US backed wars, occupations and military interventions that have made their homelands uninhabitable. Yemen is experiencing the world's largest ever recorded cholera outbreak, with 360,000 suspected cases in the three months since the outbreak started, as reported by Oxfam as of July 21, 2017. This is occurring after over two years of a US-backed Saudi-led war and continuous bombing campaign on Yemen which has destroyed vital infrastructure including sanitation facilities and even hospitals run by Doctors Without Borders. Furthermore, a Saudi-led land, sea and air blockade has prevented humanitarian supplies and medicines from entering the country.

The governments of both the US and Canada have recently announced increased military spending, which means they are preparing more wars. Why increase military capacity, if not to use it? With the invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, the bombing on Libya, the US-fomented civil war and now direct military intervention in Syria and the threats and sanctions against Iran, we have had over 16 years of a new era of war and occupation. Throughout this

time and increasingly, Canada is making a name for itself as a top weapons manufacturer, supplying weapons to its top buyer, the US, and its second biggest customer Saudi Arabia, as well as other war-mongering countries. Already the \$15 billion sale of Canadian-made armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia has caused controversy, and more so recently as video footage has been released showing Canadian made military vehicles used to repress protests in Saudi Arabia.

On July 21, Mobilization Against War and occupation (MAWO) held a monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign in downtown Vancouver, with an information table, banners and picket signs carrying the demands of US/Canada/NATO - Hands off Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Venezuela, North Korea, the Middle East and North Africa.

The rally started out with a welcoming song from Eagle Eyes, an Indigenous hereditary chief from Sechelt, who acknowledged the unceded territories of the Coast Salish people that the rally was taking place upon. Activists approached passersby to sign a petition demanding that Canada end its \$15 billion arms deal, and all arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Many positive conversations were sparked by petitioners and



organizers at the busy information table, as people stopped by to discuss and get more information.

Eagle Eyes honored the rally with a closing song, and this month's rally came to an end with the resolve to continue organizing, educating and mobilizing against war and occupation. Mobilization Against War and Occupation has been organizing monthly antiwar rallies for almost 14 years, along with antiwar forums, picket actions and cultural events. To find out more about upcoming antiwar actions in Vancouver visit [www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org), follow on twitter @MAWOVan, or find MAWO on Facebook

No to War and Occupation! Yes to Self-Determination!

US/Canada/NATO: Hands off the Middle East and North Africa!

## Vancouver Demands: Hey Trump! Lift the US Blockade on Cuba!

By Janine Solanki

Over the last two months, the tone of protest against the cruel US blockade against Cuba has taken a turn. Former US President Obama's December 17, 2014 historic announcement that the US would normalize relations with Cuba brought a period of protest against the US blockade to keep Obama accountable to his word and to seize the opportunity that Obama's announcement opened. However, on June 16th 2017 in Miami, Florida, US President Trump announced that he would "cancel" Obama's deal with Cuba, between his outright lies and rhetoric against Cuba. As of yet, the most major change that has been made is to further restrict travel by US citizens visiting Cuba, and to tighten restrictions on trade and investments in Cuba. One thing is for sure, the US government is now moving backwards, not forwards on their cruel policies against Cuba, and it more critical than ever to organize against the US blockade!

Shortly after Obama's 2014 announcement, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade – Vancouver (FCAB) formed to increase organizing and actions against the US blockade of Cuba. Every month activists





and supporters in Vancouver have picketed in front of the US consulate to demand an end to the blockade, and have been joined by protests on the same day monthly in Ottawa, as well as recently Montreal making it three Canadian cities holding monthly protests against the US blockade on Cuba!

The July 17th, 2017 FCAB picket action took place in front of the US consulate in Vancouver, and was opened with drumming and song from Eagle Eyes, an Indigenous elder and Sechelt hereditary chief. Protesters took part in energetic rounds of picketing in front of the US consulate, raising picket signs and voices to demand "Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!" and "Return Guantanamo to Cuba!" Along with local speakers, the protesters heard from activists at the Ottawa picket action also taking place that day via a phone message. Eagle Eyes led the group in a song to close off the protest action, and Cuba solidarity activists took a final photo with picket signs, Cuban flags and banners held in defiance under the sign for the US Consulate.

Activities against the US blockade has also taken place at popular Vancouver events such as the Commercial Drive Car Free Festival, on July 9th. The festival sees hundreds of thousands attend, and many people were attracted to the FCAB table for petition signing against the blockade by a big sign reading "Hey Trump! Lift the Blockade on Cuba!"

Join in the next picket action, August 17th at 4pm, in front of the US Consulate (1075 W. Pender street) Downtown Vancouver. Or, find out about Cuba events and actions at [www.vancouverblockade.org](http://www.vancouverblockade.org), find FCAB on Facebook or on Twitter @NoBloqueoVan

Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!  
Return Guantanamo to Cuba!

Follow Janine on Twitter: @janinesolanki

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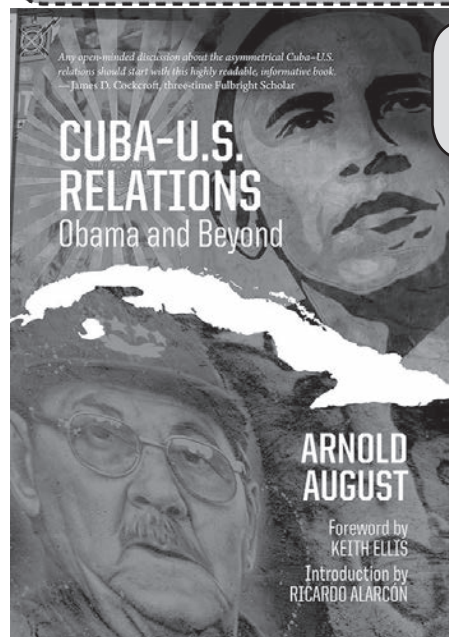
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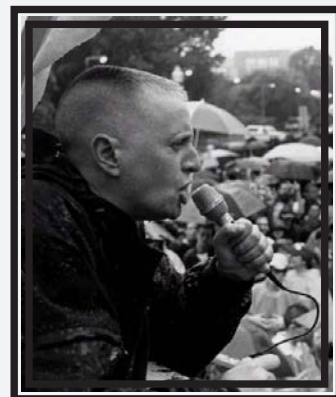
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## OUR HERITAGE



### Leslie Feinberg

Leslie identified as an anti-racist white, working-class, secular Jewish, transgender, lesbian, female, revolutionary communist. She was a member of the National Committee of Worker's World Party and managing editor of the Worker's World newspaper.

*Excerpt from "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come" (1992)*

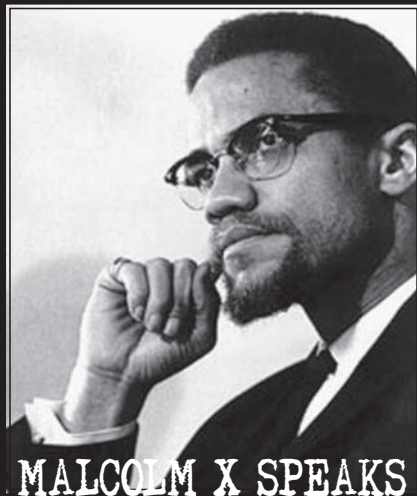
The institutionalized bigotry and oppression we face today have not always existed. They arose with the division of society into exploiter and exploited. Divide-and-conquer tactics have allowed the slave-owners, feudal landlords and corporate ruling classes to keep for themselves the lion's share of wealth created by the labouring class.

Like racism and all forms of prejudice, bigotry toward transgendered people is a deadly carcinogen. We are pitted against each other in order to keep us from seeing each other as allies.

Genuine bonds of solidarity can be forged between people who respect each other's differences and are willing to fight their enemy together. We are the class that does the work of the world, and can revolutionize it. We can win true liberation.

The struggle against intolerable conditions is on the rise around the world. And the militant role of transgendered women, men and youth's in today's fight-back movement is already helping to shape the future.

## "By Any Means Necessary..."



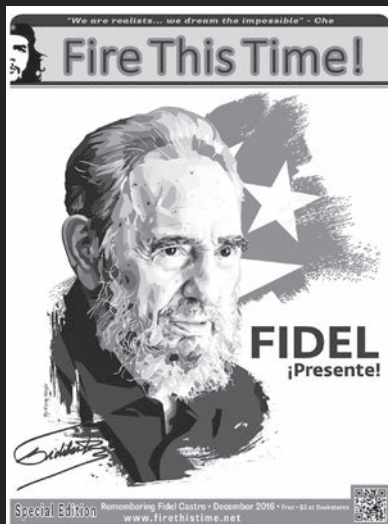
*Excerpt from Speech: The Black Revolution (April 8, 1964)*

The greatest weapon the colonial powers have used in the past against our people has always been divide-and-conquer. America is a colonial power. She has colonized 22 million Afro-Americans by depriving us of first-class citizenship, by depriving us of civil rights, actually by depriving us of human rights. She has not only deprived us of the right to be a citizen, she has deprived us of the right to be human beings, the right to be recognized and respected as men and women. And in this country the black can be fifty years old and he is still a "boy."

I grew up with white people. I was integrated before they invented the word and I have never met white people yet—if you are around them long enough—who won't refer to you as a "boy" or a "gal," no matter how old you are no matter what school you came out of, no matter what your intellectual or professional level is. In this society we remain "boys."

So America's strategy is the same strategy as that which was used in the past by the colonial powers: divide and conquer. She plays one Negro leader against the other. She plays one Negro organization against the other. She makes us think that we have different objectives, different goals.

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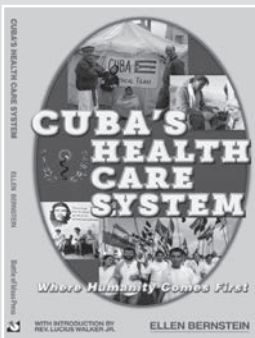
#### CUBA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WHERE HUMANITY COMES FIRST

BY ELLEN BERNSTEIN

*"The unfailing dedication of Cuban health care professionals has led to dramatic improvements in quality of life, for millions of people who previously had no other hope of receiving decent medical care. IFCO/Pastors for Peace is pleased to honor the diligent health care professionals of the Cuban health care system. We especially pay tribute to Cuba's national leadership, whose vision of universal health care as a right of every citizen sets an example for the world."*

Ellen Bernstein has served as Associate Director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) since 2003.

She has been a key staff member of IFCO's project Pastors for Peace, and has been deeply and integrally involved in IFCO's historic work with Cuba.



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HANDS OFF CUBA!**



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